

THE
POLITICAL THOUGHT
of
SAMUEL TAYLOR
COLERIDGE

A Selection by

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P R E F A C E

SETTING out to write a book on the political thought of Coleridge, I became immediately aware of the difficulty of referring readers to his original writings. Almost all the great volume of his work on politics is long out of print and generally difficult of access. It seemed a useful, and, in view of my original purpose, an essential task, to put together those passages of his political writings which remain of permanent interest and importance. To this incentive was added the needs of a number of students to whom I was engaged in expounding Coleridge's political thought. I would inscribe this book to them.

My aim has been to try to present, in the author's own words, both the development of his ideas, and a view of his thought at its maturity. Since Coleridge never composed anything like a comprehensive statement of his political thought, this has involved the extensive use of scissors and paste. I have constructed the patchwork from the great variety of materials, pamphlets, table-talk and letters, which is described in the bibliography: concealing the seams, so far as possible, by the adjustment of punctuation, capital letters, and a few linking sentences of my own in square brackets. Everything, except the words in square brackets, is Coleridge's own, and its origin may be discovered by the marginal numbers which refer to the table of references at the end of the book.

I have to thank the Rev. G. H. B. Coleridge for permission to use a passage from an unpublished MS. in his possession and to quote at length from Coleridge's letters;

P R E F A C E

Professor J. H. Muirhead both for advice and for the aids to judgment of Coleridge's achievement which are so excellently provided in his book, *Coleridge as Philosopher*; Dr. Philip Gosse for permission to reprint excerpts from the two Addresses of Coleridge on Sir Robert Peel's Bill, which were privately printed by his father, Sir Edmund Gosse, in 1913; and the Oxford University Press for permission to quote at length from E. H. Coleridge's edition of the Poems. To Messrs. Jonathan Cape I am greatly indebted for their enlightenment in undertaking to publish a work which might otherwise have been relegated to the limbo of 'un-commercial' propositions.

R. J. W.

Cambridge, 1938

INTRODUCTION

I

As poet and critic, Coleridge is ranked among the greatest in our literature. As a thinker on politics he remains, at least to the average reader, either unknown or as a 'renegade Jacobin'. Most people bracket him with the other 'Lake Poets', Wordsworth and Southey, who gloried in their youth in the French Revolution and spent the rest of their days in a kind of stupor of penitent reaction. This is not quite false as regards Wordsworth, nor quite true as regards Southey. It is not true at all of Coleridge. Yet even Alice Meynell could write of him: 'He soon yielded to the fatuous impulse of reaction, when he became a Tory.' Even if there were nothing fatuously reactionary in being a Tory, the statement would be absurd.

Coleridge was never any more a Tory than he was a Radical. He was a great Christian philosopher and seer. To attach party labels to such a man is even less informative than to call Burke a Whig or Cobbett a Radical. The procedure is misleading, and in Coleridge's case abusive. The only sense in which the use of the description 'Tory' for Coleridge is meaningful, is that of Mr. Keith Feiling. Mr. Feiling associates Coleridge with Tories of the stamp of Harley, Bolingbroke, Pitt, Canning, Young England and Disraeli, 'those who have performed the pioneer task of bridging the party over the intellectual and political revolutions of the last two hundred years... When, accordingly, they pruned the abuses of one age with

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unsparing hand, they reverted to the first and permanent principles of conservatism, and looked behind the institutions of their own generation for the spirit of the nation [i] which gave them life'. This is, perhaps, little more than to say that they are political thinkers with a sense of history. Certainly their conservatism should be written with a small 'c'. And when all is said, Coleridge's influence was rather on Carlyle, Newman and Maurice than on Disraeli. His name does not appear in the index to the three thousand pages of Messrs. Monypenny and Buckle.

He described himself, a little bitterly, in 1825, as 'a Man of Letters, friendless because of no Faction' who had seen his publications 'abused by the *Edinburgh Review* as the representative of one Party, and not even noticed by the [ii] *Quarterly Review* as the Representative of the other ...' Nearly twenty years earlier, Lord Lowther had deplored the non-party character of *The Friend*. 'I almost despair of the Conservative Party,' Coleridge wrote in 1832, 'too truly, I fear, and most ominously, self-designated Tories, and of [iii] course half-truth men.' The great ministries of his lifetime were those of Pitt and Liverpool. He was a regular critic of the one, and contemptuous of the other. He was as likely a party man as Thomas Carlyle or D. H. Lawrence. Like William Cobbett and Robert Owen, he sought not the triumph of a party, but the regeneration of society. Cobbett wanted a healthy peasantry, beer, and common decency, which he imagined to be the past. Owen wanted a clean and virtuous commonwealth of Socialists, which he imagined to be the future. Coleridge wanted the England of Christian patriots which belonged to neither past, present, nor future; the England which existed, and still exists, immanent in her history, obscured by men's sins

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and follies, plain for all to see who are not made blind by party-isms or sectarian doxies. He wanted England to be herself, and Englishmen to be themselves.

‘In two points of view I reverence man; first, as a citizen . . . and secondly, as a Christian. If men are neither the one nor the other, but a mere aggregation of individual bipeds, who acknowledge no national unity, nor believe with me in Christ, I have no more personal sympathy with them than with the dust beneath my feet.’ He is, therefore, a teacher [iv] for those who love men rather than Man. His most bitter criticism of Pitt was that he talked in ‘GENERAL PHRASES, unenforced by one single image, one single fact, of real national amelioration; of any one comfort enjoyed where it was not before; of any one class of society becoming healthier, wiser, or happier. These are *things*, these are [v] realities . . .’ He suspected philanthropists as ‘men not benevolent or beneficent to individuals . . . yet lavishing money and labour and time on the race, the abstract notion’. [vi] In supporting Peel’s Factory Bill in 1818 he wrote: ‘Generalities are apt to deceive us. Individualize the sufferings which it is the object of this Bill to remedy, follow up the detail in some one case with a human sympathy, and the deception vanishes.’ [vii]

Such a position might, at first sight, seem to indicate an apostle of ‘common sense’, whereas everyone knows that Coleridge was a ‘High German Transcendentalist’. But the apostle of common sense generally ends in uncommon nonsense, and the metaphysician brings home the bacon. If we dismiss Coleridge’s metaphysics we shall understand neither the origin nor the true nature of his political ideas. Metaphysics has never been the strong suit of English political theorists. Our most typical political philosopher

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is John Locke, and Locke did little more than rationalize the common sense of the intelligent Englishman of his day. 'Mercy on the Age and the People for whom Locke is profound and Hume subtle,' Coleridge exclaimed in a note in Pepys's Diary. Yet, for all the pragmatism of the English mind, it was reserved for a Scot to describe Coleridge's [viii] metaphysics as 'Transcendental Moonshine'. In sober fact, it was Coleridge's metaphysics which preserved him first from the barren formulas of the Utilitarian, and secondly from the confusion of the Ideal and the Actual which is the bane of the Transcendentalist.

John Stuart Mill, who ranked Coleridge with Bentham, as one of the two great seminal minds of their age, realized that one of the chief weaknesses of Utilitarianism was its [ix] ignorance of a philosophy of national character. Such a philosophy Coleridge supplied. Again, the Utilitarians had little regard for history: they might never have heard of Burke's conception of the State as a partnership between the living, the dead, and the yet unborn. Coleridge restored historicity to political thought, and taught that 'the flux of individuals in any one moment of existence is there for the sake of the State, far more than the State for them; though [x] both positions are true proportionally . . .' And he arrived at these conceptions through his metaphysics, otherwise so despised among his countrymen. Idealism, self-derivative, deepened by his study of the German thinkers, had given him the philosophy of the 'Idea' — the indwelling idea of man, the State, the universe, determined by their own ends, immanent in their history, working themselves out in Time. All codes and customs and institutions were to be studied with reference to their embodiment of an idea. All history, in the largest sense, was a vast redemptive process. As

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Professor Muirhead has put it: 'Coleridge regarded all actual constitutions, including that of his own country, as temporary and imperfect embodiments of an "idea" that was slowly revealing itself on earth, if not as a City of God, at any rate as a society of seekers after Him.' The vital [xi] difference between Coleridge and the high-and-dry Idealist is, that he distinguished between the existing, imperfect embodiment of the idea, and the ultimate, perfect embodiment. This distinction left him free to submit existing institutions to a searching criticism. It made impossible his allegiance to the Tory Party. It was the source of a radicalism more radical than that of the 'Philosophic' of that ilk, a criticism more profound and more constructive than that of any of his contemporaries, and most of his successors. The 'Idea' of private property as a public trust, for instance, was, and will yet be, more revolutionary than the communist doctrine of property, not least because it was a reversion to the 'Idea' of private property rather than an unwarranted [xii] assumption about human nature.

And just as his metaphysics preserved him from the atomic view of the State, so his religion — which was unseparable from his metaphysics — preserved him from the folly of the State-worshipper. First and last is man's conscience. First and last men are individuals. They are equal only in the sight of God, and a Church is the only true democracy. We are men first, and because we are men we [xiii] are Christians, and because we are Christians we are individuals. God is the unity of every nation, and the first duty of every man is to his conscience, which is the still, small voice of God. The State exists to enable us to be better men. 'Let us become a better people' and all else shall be added unto us. It is, he might almost have said with [xiv]

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St. Augustine, a penalty and a remedy for man's sin. We are not good enough to live without the State, but together we may use it for our redemption.

Perhaps he wavered. England seemed on the verge of anarchy when he wrote to Lord Liverpool, in 1817, that it was high time that the subjects of Christian Governments 'should be taught that neither historically, or morally, in fact, or by right, have men made the State; but that the State and that alone makes them men'; that they are there for the State, rather than the State for them 'though both [xv] positions are true proportionally . . .' Proportionally. There is the crux. It is useless to search the pages of Coleridge for a blessing upon the Totalitarian State. He was a Christian before he was an Idealist, even if he was an Idealist because he was a Christian.

Coleridge's religious faith has deterred, and no doubt still deters, many who would otherwise accept his teaching. To Carlyle it was incomprehensible that such 'a sublime man' should subscribe to the old Anglican Church 'with [xvi] its singular old rubrics and surplices at All Hallowtide . . .' To such critics, there is no answer, only an admonishment: Go, read what Coleridge had to say on the National Church, and remember always the distinction between its Idea and the actualization thereof. In Idea, the National Church was the guardian of the national culture, and included within it *all* the learned, or the 'clerisy', of the realm. It was the [xvii] civilizing force in society, the leaven in the lump. In actuality, however, the Church of Coleridge's day was far from a perfect embodiment of its Idea, and he was keenly aware of it. 'The present prospects of the Church weigh heavily on my soul . . . There seems to me at present to be a curse upon the English Church . . .' It had clung too much to

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the court and the State, it had lost the hearts of the people, it was 'blighted with prudence'. But, by holding fast to its [xviii] Idea, he was able to set men on the right path to its revival as a living influence in society.

I I

Coleridge's lifetime coincided with that re-birth of the Lockian materialist philosophy which found its form in Benthamite Utilitarianism. Born in 1772, four years before the publication of Bentham's *Fragment of Government*, he died in 1834, only two years before Bentham's most influential disciple, James Mill. Moreover, Coleridge, though never a Utilitarian (save with a small 'u'), lived in the Locke tradition before he became its critic. It can never be said that he criticized it as an outsider: he knew it from within, and burst from its cramping confines. He belonged to its Hartleyan period: like Hartley, he was at Jesus College, Cambridge; he called his first-born David Hartley Coleridge; and it is notable that he laid stress on Hartley as a great *Christian* philosopher. This was in 1796. But his mind [xix] could not rest there. What was it that drove him thence?

First, I think it is well to remember that he came of a country clergyman's family: his earliest impressions must have been steeped in the gentle piety of the Rev. John Coleridge, Vicar of Ottery St. Mary's. He lived in a Christian home until he was ten. Again, he came of country-folk, a long line of farmers and peasants, dwellers in remote places where change is slow and the abiding verities of man are not easily dismissed as antique prejudices. The love of nature, the beauty of wood and field and stream, entered

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into him early, and no sensitive child brought up in the country can escape a wondering sense of the unity of all living things. There dwells a spirit immanent in nature; to a young Hardy or a Housman it may be a cruel and malicious fate; to a gentler, more trusting mind, it is a just and merciful God.

There is one Mind, one omnipresent Mind,
Omnific, His most holy name is Love....
... But 'tis God

[X] Diffused through all, that doth make all one whole . . .

While to James Mill there was no God because there was cruelty and suffering in the world, to the young Coleridge who from lakes and mountain-rills, clouds, quiet dales, and rocks and seas, had drunk in all his intellectual life, there could be no extinction at the grave. Where was there [xxi] room for death 'in this moving, stirring and harmonious universe'? The problem resolves itself finally to this: a man either *knows* that there is no death, or he does not; either he *knows* that matter is not the 'ultimate particle' of the universe, or he does not; no one, and no thing, can prove it to him, either way. Coleridge knew, always. He was that kind of man. His upbringing strengthened the knowledge, it did not create it.

But how was this inconsistent with the philosophy of Locke and the gentle Hartley? There might be one Mind, Omnific, etc. . . . but, suppose that Mind made the universe and man as a kind of machine, a clock with wheels within wheels? Why not? Was there any reason why the mind of man should not be 'a lazy looker-on,' a register of sense-impressions, a kind of automatic contrivance that works on the phenomena presented to it by the one Mind Omnific?

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There was none, so far as Coleridge could see, until 1801. So he was a Necessitarian. Men are made what they are by circumstances. It was a doctrine well-suited to the undergraduate, the writer of odes on the destruction of bastilles, the Pantisocrat. Change the world and you can change men. Infinite perfectability follows. Unlimited hope of improvement in *this* world. It is only a matter of getting rid of Kings, Priests, Aristocrats, and like pests. Nor was the young Coleridge prepared to sit down and wait for the millennium. He lectured at Bristol, he preached and tried to practise Pantisocracy, he founded *The Watchman* ('That all may know the truth, and the truth may make us free'), and went on tour to get subscribers. The most important of these activities for the future development of his mind was Pantisocracy. He decided to actualize the 'Idea' in a little community on the banks of the Susquehannah. Pantisocracy has been the subject of tolerant smiles on the part of the unknowing. To Coleridge it was, as Stephen Potter has shown, his first attempt to actualize an 'Idea'. [xxii]

It failed. Men proved to be less susceptible of practical enthusiasm than he had once thought. The failure of *The Watchman* and his experience of patriots when he canvassed for subscribers, drove home the lesson. 'In the amiable intoxication of youthful benevolence', he was to write in 1809, 'men are apt to mistake their own best virtues and choicest powers for the average qualities and attributes of the human character ...' Already, in *The Watchman* in [xxiii] 1796, he was writing: 'In my calmer moments I have the firmest faith that all things work together for good, but alas! it seems a long and a dark process.' Within two years [xxiv] the change had come. 'I wish', he wrote to his brother George in April, 1798, 'to be a good man and a Christian,

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but I am no Whig, no Reformist, no Republican . . .
[xxv] Governments', he says, 'are more the effect than the cause of that which we are.' Men will, in fact, get the kind of government they deserve. The stress has moved from circumstances to *men*. Make men good, and governments will be good. The wheel has come full circle.

How are we to make men good? By 'nigher and more continuous' agencies than governments. Nor is infinite perfectability in this world to be hoped for. In that same letter of 1798 he admits to a steadfast belief in original sin. The sole cure is to be found in the spirit of the Gospel.

If human institutions are not to be regarded as the finally efficient instruments of human perfectability, how are they to be regarded? During the next three years he was discovering the answer. From September 1798 to July 1799 he was studying in Germany. From 1799 to 1801 he was studying the problems of his own times as a writer on the *Morning Post*. In 1801 he was hard at work on German metaphysics. In March, 1801, come the famous letters to Thomas Poole, in which he claims to have overthrown 'all the irreligious metaphysics of modern infidels — especially the doctrine of necessity'. The mind of man, he is convinced, is no mere 'lazy looker-on on an external world' but
[xxvi] 'made in God's image'. And, as ever, his metaphysical notions and his religious beliefs went together. Looking back on this period in 1817, he wrote: 'I cannot doubt that the difference of my metaphysical notions from those of Unitarians in general contributed to my final re-conversion
[xxvii] to the whole truth in Christ . . .' And his politics? What of human institutions? They are to be studied 'according to the Idea'. Coleridge is an Idealist.

How much did Germany contribute to this development?

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Was it just a plagiarism of 'Kant and the Germans'? Professor Muirhead, who has gone into the question with great learning and perception in his *Coleridge as Philosopher*, tells us that 'the view that his own philosophy was little more than a transcript from the German of Kant and Schelling . . . would be a superficial view of the real state of the case, and one of the first results of a closer study of his philosophical opinions as a whole is the conviction of its entire baselessness.' Professor Muirhead thinks 'there is no reason to question either the sincerity or truth' of Coleridge's own story of the development of his views. [xxviii]

Moving into the Idealist position, delivered from the Sensationalist impasse of a radical opposition between subjective and objective reality, rejoicing in the return of the mind from the position of a machine registering sense-impressions to be a creative force in the shaping of truth; Coleridge was led to initiate a revolution in English political thought. Mind, ceasing to be the simple analytic reason of the philosophes, and becoming a spiritual force capable of apprehension by the individual by virtue of direct intuition, the relationships of individuals are no longer confined to external contacts between eternally separate entities. Individuals meet and inter-penetrate and modify each other. A society ceases to be simply the sum of the indi- [xxix] viduals who compose it. In short, four and five may *make* nine, but they are not nine. The State is now conceived as a community bound together not only for reasons of utility: it is a unity of mind, a spiritual community. Hence Coleridge's attempt to regain the State for the spiritual sphere, hence his conception of the National Church. He is led on to attempt a complete re-orientation of the method of political science. The perceptions resulting from

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the impact of phenomena on the mind become the material of philosophy. The political thinker is concerned with something more than such phenomena in themselves. He is concerned with their 'Idea', the 'Idea' of the State, the 'Idea' of the National Church. And because these 'Ideas' manifest themselves in Time, History ceases to be a glorified news-reel, as it had been to the eighteenth-century philosopher, and becomes a stereoscopic panorama, an epic of ideas.

The full fruit of this development of Coleridge's thought belongs to the last period of his life, after he had settled at Highgate in 1816 and had sufficiently recovered from his physical disabilities to compose *The Lay Sermons* and *The Constitution of the Church and State*. But the first-fruits may be seen at a much earlier date. Indeed, the Idealist approach may be discerned even before his intensive study of the German thinkers. It is evident as early as 1799-1801 when he was writing for the *Morning Post*. To Thomas de Quincey it seemed that 'no more appreciable monument could be raised to the memory of Coleridge than a republication of his essays in the *Morning Post*, but still more of those afterwards published in *The Courier* . . . Worlds of fine thinking lie buried in that vast abyss . . .' They were republished by his daughter, Sara Coleridge, in 1850, under the title *Essays on His Own Times*. The volumes have been long out of print. Yet, these writings, thrown off with the printer's devil at his elbow, contain some of the finest work that has ever appeared in the English press. Rarely in political journalism has any man evinced an equal power to grasp the meaning and direction of contemporary events, to catch the very stuff of history before it has become 'History', to convey such swift and yet profound impressions in language which,

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while it remains good journalism, is yet great literature. [xxx] We might say of Coleridge the journalist what Coleridge said of Burke: that by habitual reference to principles he was able to see all things, actions, and events, in relation to the laws which determine their existence and circumscribe their possibility. In other words, that he had become a seer.

His Idealism comes out more plainly in the articles in *The Courier* and in his periodical publication (1809-1810) *The Friend*. The former contain his brilliant exposure of [xxxi] Utilitarian ethics and a striking passage on 'the spirit of a [xxxii] Nation'. In the pages of *The Friend* are to be found all the essentials of his later philosophy: the Kantian distinction between the Reason and the Understanding, the innate moral principle of men and societies of men, the destructive analysis of 'the grounds of government as laid exclusively in the pure reason'. The more formal and less perishable works which proceeded from the Highgate period go no further in substance.

III

The most striking feature of Coleridge's thought is its unity. This is true even of its expression in literary form. It is a false dichotomy which would divide his metaphysics from his poetry, or his politics from either. Why not metaphysics in poetry? he asked Thelwall in 1797. Let us not draw up a self-denying ordinance for poets. And the author of *Fears in Solitude* might well have asked, why not politics in poetry? Nor will the candid reader attempt to separate the religion, the metaphysics, and the poetic imagery from the politics of such works as *The Lay Sermons* and

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The Church and State. To Coleridge, the political world hung by the interwoven threads of religion, metaphysics and poetry, from the little finger of God. We may admit that his poetic powers declined after 1800. He himself knew well enough what had happened (see 'Ode to Dejection', vi). But the work went on. The prose-works are not a second best, save as a brother may be second best to his sister. They are of the same parent, and the same spirit breathes in them.

Setting aside the question of literary form, the unity of Coleridge's thought is, as it were, both horizontal and vertical. It is a unity in time: from the morning of the young Pantisocrat to the evening light on Highgate Hill. It is also a unity in substance: religion, philosophy, and politics are absolutely interdependent. He was prepared to admit, and to allow for, the errors of a man's developing mind. He would even admit that wrong principles have a golden side. He knew well enough that he had made many mistakes on the way to working out his principles. But he might have claimed that the principles that he was working out were the same from beginning to end. To use his own word, the 'Idea' was the same. He made his mistakes, as a strong and creative mind must. One is reminded of Beethoven wrestling with 'the Idea' of the Eroica Symphony. The great and glorious truth exists — somewhere. It is his God-given purpose, by trial and error and the bloody sweat of labour, to show it to men. This is the difference between the artist and all other men in politics. The artist does not 'change his mind'. The truth is in him from the beginning, and the truth is a vision, not a synthesis of ideas intellectually conceived. John Stuart Mill changed his mind. His mind changed as he read and learned more about his fellow-men.

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Mill changed. Coleridge grew. Mill was a pile of bricks. Coleridge was an acorn.

The remarkable consistency in fundamentals which runs throughout Coleridge's political thought may be best appreciated by reference to his long-forgotten writings in *The Watchman* and his only slightly better-known lectures, 'Conciones ad Populum' (1795-6). Here are all the essentials of his later analysis of social ills and remedies: the dangers of an 'inorganic' society, the need for constant reference to fixed [xxxiii] principles, the importance of education as a fore-runner of [xxxiv] social change, the duty of the enlightened to refrain from [xxxv] appealing *to* the people but to plead *for* them, the stress on [xxxvi] duties as the basis of rights, the value of religion as [xxxvii] philosophy capable of immediate application to social [xxxviii] purposes. It was a queer Jacobin who could see any good in Burke and who summed up his advice to 'Patriots' in the [xxxix] words: 'Go, preach the Gospel to the poor!' No doubt patriots were embarrassed to be addressed thus: 'You must give up your sensuality and your philosophy, the pimp of your sensuality; you must condescend to believe in God and in the existence of a Future State!'

Secondly, there is what I have called the unity of his thought vertically. Coleridge was incapable of holding philosophical opinions that quarrelled with his religious beliefs, and vice versa. He was equally incapable of holding political views that did not grow out of his religion and his philosophy. When he was a Necessitarian he was a Deist: and therefore a Democrat — albeit of the Pantisocratic variety. Necessitarianism failed to clothe what he *knew* about men and nature, and he accepted the doctrine of original sin and redemption through the Word. He called it a conversion to the whole truth in Christ, but it was

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rather an expansion to embrace *all* the facts than a change from one creed to another. And it followed, as night follows day, that he ceased to believe in infinite perfectability in this world. Therefore, governments are what we make them. Therefore politics are second to religion, governments second to men; and he was prevented from ever being an Idealist in the sense of a Fascist or a Communist. Christianity, with its teaching of the eternal value of each individual soul, kept alive in him the core of individualism. Kantian metaphysics, with its destruction of the conflict between subjective and objective reality, kept alive in him the interdependence of men. The State, to Coleridge, was St. Augustine's *Civitas Terrena* with a Kantian underlay.

The principle of unity, when that unity is organic and not imposed from without, is a source of strength to a thinker on politics; but it may also detract from his effectiveness. It is a source of strength in that he cannot be inconsistent: he is obliged persistently to refer his thought to fundamentals, he is — as Coleridge said of Burke (and as was equally true of himself) — a scientific statesman, a [xl] seer. On the other hand, it may be a source of weakness in that the unifying principle is so clear and all-pervading to himself that he feels no necessity to construct an elaborate statement of his philosophy. There is greater superficial clarity and orderliness about the work of the thinker who builds up his thought synthetically: he is obliged to be orderly because his thoughts come one after the other. But when a man possesses the abiding unity of his thought in his own soul, he may throw off a hundred scraps of wisdom deeply dyed with its colour, but may leave behind him no neat text-book containing his gospel.

Yet Coleridge did wish to leave behind him an elaborate

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statement of his philosophy. Not only did he wish to satisfy his friends, who had been deploring his 'wasted talents' for years, but he was moved by a passionate longing to save the world from its sins and follies. It was a false and hateful philosophy which afflicted England; economic systems, and all the material evils of the age, were but symptoms of that. As he wrote to Lord Liverpool in 1817, 'the predominant philosophy is the keynote' (see pp. 209-16, and also 92-3, of text). He longed to leave on record his own testimony to the truth that would save men: to write the *Magnum Opus* for which, he believed, mankind was athirst. To the end, the motto of his youthful *Watchman* inspired his pen: 'That all may know the Truth, and the Truth may make us free.'

As early as 1814 he was planning a comprehensive and systematic statement of his thought which was to 'revolutionize all that has been called Philosophy or Metaphysics in England and France since the era of the commencing predominance of the mechanical system'. He makes frequent reference to the work after 1821, and large fragments of the *Magnum Opus* exist in manuscript. Professor Muirhead tells us that these remains show him to have made 'a far more serious attempt to work out his ideas into a clear and consistent form than is commonly supposed.' But the work was never completed, and the student of Coleridge's political speculations remains confronted with a mass of essays, tracts, and *pièces d'occasion*. Even in set performances like *The Constitution of the Church and State* he is likely to be baffled by excursions into Hebrew History, anecdotal illustrations, and a host of wondrous appendices. For Coleridge wrote 'as he talked, and, as De Quincey tells us, listeners to his talk were frequently perplexed by the huge

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circuit of his ideas, and losing him 'naturally enough supposed that he had lost himself'. But the written, unlike the spoken word, allows of a process of re-arrangement and integration which may serve to show the true shape and character of the argument. That process is what has been attempted in the text that follows.

P A R T O N E

Y O U T H

1 7 9 1 - 1 7 9 6

*Oh never can I remember those days with either
shame or regret. For I was most sincere, most
disinterested. My opinions were, indeed, in
many and most important points erroneous; but
my heart was single*

(BIOGRAPHIA LITERARIA, 1817)

I RELIGION

I HAVE little faith, yet am wonderfully fond of speculating on mystical systems. [i]

I long ago theoretically and in a less degree experimentally knew the necessity of faith in order to regulate virtue, nor did I even seriously disbelieve the existence of a future state. In short, my religious creed bore, and perhaps bears, a correspondence with my mind and heart. I had too much vanity to be altogether a Christian, too much tenderness of nature to be utterly an infidel. Fond of the dazzle of wit, I could not read without some degree of pleasure the levities of Voltaire or the reasonings of Helvetius; but, tremblingly alive to the feelings of humanity, and susceptible to the charms of truth, my heart forced me to admire the 'beauty of holiness' in the Gospel, forced me to *love* Jesus, whom my reason (perhaps my reasonings) would not permit me to worship — my faith, therefore, was made up of the Evangelists and the deistic philosophy — a kind of *religious twilight*. . . . [ii]

The religion which Christ taught is simply, first, that there is an omnipresent Father of infinite power, wisdom and goodness; and, secondly, that when we appear to men to die, we do not utterly perish, but after this life shall continue to enjoy or suffer the consequences and natural effects of the habits we have formed here, whether good or evil. This is the Christian *religion*, and all of the Christian *religion* . . . 'It is a religion for democrats.' It certainly teaches in the most explicit terms, the rights of man, his right to wisdom, his

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right to an equal share in all the blessings of nature; it commands its disciples to go everywhere, and everywhere to preach those rights . . . By faith I understand, first a deduction from experiments in favour of the existence of something not experienced, and secondly the motives which attend such a deduction. Now motives, being selfish, are only the beginning and the *foundation*, necessary and of first-rate importance, yet made of vile materials and hidden [iii] beneath the splendid superstructure.

RELIGIOUS MUSINGS

1794-1796

There is one Mind, one omnipresent Mind,
Omnific. His most holy name is Love.
Truth of subliming import! with the which
Who feeds and saturates his constant soul,
He from his small particular orbit flies
With blest outstarting! From himself he flies,
Stands in the sun, and with no partial gaze
Views all creation; and he loves it all,
And blesses it, and calls it very good!

'Tis the sublime of man,
Our noontide Majesty, to know ourselves
Parts and proportions of one wondrous whole!
This fraternizes man, this constitutes
Our charities and bearings. But 'tis God
Diffused through all, that doth make all one whole;

Believe thou, O my soul,
Life is a vision shadowy of truth;

PHILOSOPHY

And vice, and anguish, and the wormy grave,
Shapes of a dream! The veiling clouds retire,
And lo! the Throne of the redeeming God
Forth flashing unimaginable day
Wraps in one blaze earth, heaven and deepest hell. [iv]

2 PHILOSOPHY

Mrs. Coleridge was delivered on Monday, September 19th, 1796, half past two in the morning, of a SON . . . Its name is David Hartley Coleridge. I hope that ere he be a man, if God destines him for continuance in this life, his head will be convinced of, and his heart saturated with, the truths so ably supported by that great master of *Christian* Philosophy. [i]

We cannot inculcate on the minds of each other too often or with too great earnestness the necessity of cultivating benevolent affections . . . For this 'subdued sobriety' of temper, a practical faith in the doctrine of philosophical necessity, seems the only preparative. That vice is the effect of error and the offspring of surrounding circumstances, the object therefore of condolence not of anger, is a proposition easily understood and as easily demonstrated. But to make it spread from the understanding to the affections . . . it is not enough that we have once swallowed these truths — we must feed on them as insects on a leaf, till the whole heart be coloured by their qualities and show its food in every the minutest fibre. [ii]

I have the firmest faith that the final cause of all evils in

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the moral and natural world is to awaken intellectual activity . . . Benevolence may be defined 'Natural sympathy made permanent by enlightened selfishness'. In my calmer moments I have the firmest faith that all things work together for good, but alas! it seems a long and a dark process.
[iii]

3 POLITICS

(a) THE FRENCH REVOLUTION: THE FIRST PHASE

My feelings . . . and imagination did not remain unkindled in this general conflagration; and I confess I should be more inclined to be ashamed than proud of myself, if they had: I was a sharer in the general vortex, though my little world described the path of its revolution in an orbit of
[i] its own.

THE DESTRUCTION OF THE BASTILE

1789

But cease, ye pitying bosoms, cease to bleed!
Such scenes no more demand the tear humane;
I see, I see! glad Liberty succeed
With every patriot virtue in her train!
And mark yon peasant's raptured eyes;
Secure he views the harvests rise;
No fetter vile the mind shall know,
And Eloquence shall fearless glow
Yes! Liberty the soul of life shall reign,
Shall throb in every pulse, shall flow thro' every vein.

POLITICS

Shall France alone a despot spurn?

Shall she alone, O Freedom, boast thy care?

Lo, round thy standard Belgia's heroes burn,

Tho' Power's blood-stain'd streamers fire the air,

And wider yet thy influence spread,

Nor e'er recline thy weary head,

Till every land from pole to pole

Shall boast one independent soul!

And still, as erst, let favour'd Britain be

First ever of the first and freest of the free!

[ii]

(b) PANTISOCRACY

Whatever my principles might be in themselves, they were almost equidistant from all the three prominent parties, the Pittites, the Foxites and the Democrats.

[iii]

What I dared not expect from constitutions of government and whole nations, I hoped from religion and a small company of chosen individuals, and formed a plan, as harmless as it was extravagant, of trying the experiment of human perfectability on the banks of the Susquehannah; where our little society, in its second generation, was to have combined the innocence of the patriarchal age with the knowledge and genuine refinements of European culture. [iv]

PANTISOCRACY

1795

No more my visionary soul shall dwell
On joys that were; no more endure to weigh
The shame and anguish of the evil day,

Y O U T H

Wisely forgetful! O'er the ocean swell
 Sublime of Hope, I seek the cottag'd dell
 Where Virtue calm with careless step may stray,
 And dancing to the moonlight roundelay,
 The wizard Passions weave an holy spell.
 Eyes that have ach'd with Sorrow! Ye shall weep
 Tears of doubt-mingled joy, like theirs who start
 From Precipices of distemper'd sleep,
 On which the fierce-eyed Fiends their revels keep,
 [v] And see the rising Sun, and feel it dart
 New rays of pleasance trembling to the heart.

S. T. Coleridge to R. Southey, Health and Republicanism
 [vi] to be! . . . I preached pantisocracy and aspheterism with so
 much success that two great huge fellows of butcher-like
 appearance danced about the room in enthusiastic agitation.
 And one of them of his own accord called for a large glass of
 brandy, and drank it off to this his own toast, 'God save the
 King! And may he be the last'. Southey, such men may
 be of use . . . At the inn I was sore afraid that I had caught the
 itch from a Welsh democrat; who was charmed with my
 sentiments; he grasped my hand with flesh-bruising ardour,
 and I trembled lest some disappointed citizens of the
 [vii] animalcular republic should have emigrated.

Pantisocracy! Oh, I shall have such a scheme of it! My
 head, my heart are all alive. I have drawn up my arguments
 in battle-array; they shall have the *tactician* excellence of the
 mathematician with the enthusiasm of the poet. The leading
 idea of pantisocracy is to make men necessarily virtuous by
 [viii] removing all motives to evil — all possible temptation.

It is *wrong*, Southey, for a little girl with a half-famished
 sickly baby in her arms to put her head in at the window of

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an inn — ‘Pray give me a bit of bread and meat!’ from a party dining on lamb, green peas and salad. Why? Because it is *impertinent* and *obtrusive*! ‘I am a gentleman! and wherefore the clamorous voice of woe intrude upon my ear?’ My companion is a man of cultivated though not vigorous understanding; his feelings are all on the side of humanity; yet such are the unfeeling remarks which the lingering remains of aristocracy occasionally prompt . . . Farewell, sturdy Republican! [ix]

To his brother George:

How often and how unkindly are the ebullitions of youthful disputations mistaken for the result of fixed principles. People have resolved that I am a democrat, and accordingly look at everything I do through the spectacles of prejudication . . . Solemnly, my brother, I tell you, I am *not* a democrat. I see, evidently, that the present is not the highest state of society of which we are capable. After a diligent, I may say an intense, study of Locke, Hartley, and others who have written most wisely on the nature of man, I appear to myself to see the point of possible perfection at which the world may perhaps be destined to arrive. But how to lead mankind from one point to the other is a process of such infinite complexity, that in deep-felt humility I resign it to that Being ‘Who shaketh the Earth out of her place, and the pillars thereof tremble. . . .’

I have been asked what is the best conceivable mode of meliorating society. My answer has been this: ‘Slavery is an abomination to my feeling of the head and the heart. Did Jesus teach the *abolition* of it? No! He taught those principles of which the necessary *effect* was to abolish all slavery. He prepared the mind for the reception before

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he poured the blessing.' You ask me what the friend of universal equality would do. I answer: 'Talk not politics. [x] Preach the Gospel!'

(C) THE RADICAL JOURNALIST AND LECTURER

Towards the close of the first year from the time that in an inauspicious hour I left the friendly cloisters, and the happy grove of quiet, ever-honoured Jesus College, Cambridge, I was persuaded by sundry philanthropists and Anti-polemists to set on foot a periodical work, entitled *The Watchman*, that, according to the general motto of the work, *all might know the truth*, and the truth might make us free! . . . I made enemies of all my Jacobin and democratic patrons; for, disgusted by their infidelity, and their adoption of French morals together with French *psilosophy*, and perhaps thinking that charity ought to begin nearest home; instead of abusing the Government and the Aristocrats chiefly or entirely, as had been expected of me, I levelled my attacks at 'modern patriotism' . . . At the same time, I avowed my conviction that national education and a concurring spread of the Gospel were the indispensable condition of any true political melioration. Thus by the time the seventh number was published, I had the mortification . . . of seeing the preceding numbers exposed in sundry old iron shops for a penny a piece.

[xi] [The following excerpts are taken from *The Watchman*, 1796, and from *Conciones ad Populum*, published in 1795]:
The importance of principles

The times are trying; and in order to be prepared against

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their difficulties we should have acquired a prompt facility of adverting in all our doubts to some grand and comprehensive truth. In a deep and strong soil must that tree fix its roots, the height of which is to 'reach to heaven, and the sight of it to the ends of all the earth'.

[xii]

A bas les doctrinaires!

The majority of democrats appear to me to have attained that portion of knowledge in politics which infidels possess in religion . . . they both attribute to the system which they reject all the evils existing under it . . . both, contemplating truth and justice 'in the nakedness of abstraction' condemn constitutions and dispensations without having sufficiently examined the natures, circumstances and capacities of their recipients.

[xiii]

The searcher after truth must love and be loved; for general benevolence is a necessary motive to constancy of pursuit; and this general benevolence is gotten and rendered permanent by social and domestic affections. Let us beware of that proud philosophy which affects to inculcate philanthropy while it denounces every home-born feeling by which it is produced and nurtured. The paternal and filial duties discipline the heart and prepare it for the love of all mankind. The intensity of private attachments encourages, not prevents, universal benevolence.

[xiv]

The Ideal Patriot

Accustomed to regard all the affairs of men as a process, they never hurry and they never pause . . . Convinced that vice originates not in the man but in the surrounding circumstances; not in the heart but in the understanding; he is hopeless concerning no one — to correct a vice or

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generate a virtuous conduct he pollutes not his hands with the scourge of coercion, but by endeavouring to alter the circumstances, would remove, or by strengthening the [xv] intellect, disarm the temptation.

Education

The annals of the French Revolution have recorded in letters of blood that the knowledge of the few cannot counteract the ignorance of the many; that the light of philosophy, when it is confined to a small minority, points out the possessors of it as the victims, rather than the illuminators [xvi] of the multitude.

The purifying alchemy of education may transmute the fierceness of an ignorant man into virtuous energy . . . For can we wonder that men should want humanity, who want all the circumstances of life that humanize? Can we wonder that with the ignorance of brutes they should unite [xvii] their ferocity? . . . That general illumination should precede revolution is a truth as obvious as that the vessel should be cleansed before we fill it with a pure liquor. But the mode [xviii] of diffusing it is not discoverable with equal facility.

[The impediments to the diffusion of knowledge are vested interests, but Providence is counteracting these impediments by the following means]:

First, and principally, the progress of the Methodists and other disciples of Calvin . . . the very act of dissenting from established opinions must generate habits precursive to the love of freedom . . . Nor should we forget that however absurd their enthusiasm may be, yet if Methodism produce sobriety and domestic habits among the lower classes, it makes them susceptible of liberty; and this very enthusiasm does perhaps supersede the use of spirituous

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liquors and bring on the same pleasing tumult of the brain without injuring the health or exhausting the wages.

Secondly, the institution of large manufactories; in many of which it is the custom for a newspaper to be regularly read, and sometimes larger publications.

Thirdly, the number of book-societies established in almost every town and city of the kingdom.

Fourthly, the increasing experience of the dreadful effects of war and corruption.

[xix]

The present duty of Patriots.

In the disclosal of opinion, it is our duty to consider the character of those to whom we address ourselves, their situations, and probable degree of knowledge. We should be bold in the avowal of political truth among those only whose minds are susceptible of reasoning: and never to the multitude, who, ignorant and needy, must necessarily act from the impulse of inflamed passions.

[xx]

We certainly should never attempt to make proselytes by appeals to the selfish feelings — and consequently should plead *for* the oppressed, not *to* them. The Author of an essay on political justice considers private societies as the sphere of real utility — that each one illuminating those immediately beneath him — truth by a gradual descent may at last reach the lowest order. But this is rather plausible than just or practicable. Society, as at present constituted, does not resemble a chain that ascends in a continuity of links. There are three ranks possessing an intercourse with each other: these are well comprised in the superscription of a perfumer's advertisement which I lately saw — 'The Nobility, Gentry, and People of Dress'. But, alas! between the parlour and the kitchen, the tap and the coffee-room,

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there is a gulph that may not be passed. He would appear to me to have adopted the best as well as the most benevolent mode of diffusing truth, who, uniting the zeal of the Methodist with the views of the philosopher, should be *personally* among the poor, and teach them their *duties* in order that he may render them susceptible of their rights.

Yet by what means can the lower classes be made to learn their duties and urged to practise them? The human race may perhaps possess the capability of all excellence: and truth, I doubt not, is omnipotent to a mind already disciplined for its reception; but assuredly the overworked labourer skulking into an ale-house is not likely to exemplify the one or prove the other. In that barbarous tumult of inimical interests which the present state of society exhibits, *religion* appears to offer the only means universally *efficient*. The perfectness of future men is indeed a benevolent tenet, and may operate on a few visionaries, whose studious habits supply them with employment and seclude them from temptation. But a distant prospect which we are never to reach will seldom quicken our footsteps, however lovely it may appear . . . 'Go, preach the GOSPEL to the poor.' By its simplicity it will meet their comprehension, by its benevolence soften their affections, by its precepts it will direct their conduct, by the vastness of its motives ensure their obedience. The situation of the poor is perilous: they are indeed both

' . . . from within and from without
Unarmed to all temptations.'

Prudential reasonings will in general be powerless with them. For the incitements of this world are weak in proportion as we are wretched . . . They, too, who live from hand-

to-mouth, will most frequently become improvident. Possessing no *stock* of happiness they eagerly seize the gratification of the moment . . . Nor is the desolate state of their families a restraining motive, unsoftened as they are by education, and benumbed into selfishness by the touch of extreme want. Domestic affections depend on association. We love an object if, as often as we see or recollect it, an agreeable sensation arises in our mind. But alas! how should *he* glow with the charities of father and husband who, gaining scarcely more than his own necessities demand, must have been accustomed to regard his wife and children not as the soothers of tired and hungry but as rivals for the insufficient meal! In a man accustomed to stand the tyranny of the *present* can be overpowered only by the ten-fold mightiness of the *future*. Religion will drive his gloom with her promises, and, by habituating his soul to anticipate an infinitely great revolution hereafter, will prepare it even for the sudden reception of a beam of light of amelioration in this world.

Those institutions of society which should condemn men to the necessity of twelve hours' daily toil would make the *soul* a slave, and sink the *rational* being in the mere animal. It is a mockery of our fellow creatures, wrong, to call them equal in rights, when, by the bitter comparison of their wants, we make them inferior to us in all that can warm the heart or dignify the understanding. Let us not say that this is the work of time -- that it is impracticable at present, unless we each in our individual capacities, do strenuously and perseveringly endeavour to diffuse among our fellow-men those comforts and that illumination which, far beyond all political ordinances, are the true equalizers of men.

YOUTH

4 HIS OWN TIMES

Edmund Burke

Mr. Burke always appeared to me to have displayed great vigour of intellect, and an almost prophetic keenness of penetration; nor can I think his merit diminished because he has secured the aids of sympathy to his cause by the warmth of his emotions . . . Alas! we fear that this Sun of Genius is well-nigh extinguished: a few bright spots linger on its orb, but scarcely larger than the dark *maculae* visible on it in the hour of its strength and effulgence . . . We feel for the honour of his genius; and mourn to find one of her most richly-gifted children associated with the Youngs, Wyndhams, and Reeveses¹ of the day . . . and the rest of that motley pack that open in the most hideous concert whenever our State-Nimrod provokes the scent by a trail of rancid plots and false insurrections! . . . It is consoling to the lovers of human nature to reflect that Edmund Burke, the only writer of that faction 'whose name would not sully the page of an opponent', learnt the discipline of his genius in a different corps. At the flames which rise from the altar of freedom he kindled that torch with which he since endeavoured to set fire to her temple. Peace be to his spirit when it departs from us: this is the severest punishment I wish for him — that he may be appointed under-porter to St. Peter, and be obliged to open the gate of heaven to [i] Brissot, Roland, Fayette, and Priestley!

¹ Contemporary apologists and propagandists for the Anti-Jacobin policy of the Younger Pitt ('our State-Nimrod').

PART TWO

GROWTH

1797-1809

I have for some time past withdrawn myself totally from the consideration of immediate causes, which are infinitely complex and uncertain, to muse on fundamental and general causes, the causae causarum . . . I wrap my face in my mantle and wait, with a subdued and patient thought, expecting to hear 'the still small voice' which is God.

(April, 1798)

I RELIGION

[*On the last day of the year 1796*] I retired to a cottage in Somersetshire, at the foot of Quantock, and devoted my thoughts and studies to the foundations of religion and morals. Here I found myself all afloat. Doubts rushed in; broke upon me 'from the fountains of the great deep', and fell 'from the windows of heaven'. The fontal truths of natural religion and the books of Revelation alike contributed to the flood; and it was long ere my ark touched on an Ararat, and rested. [i]

[*The following excerpts from letters written at this time show his gradual recovery of religious faith during the years 1797-1802*]:

All things appear little, all the knowledge that can be acquired child's play; the universe itself! what but an immense heap of *little* things? I can contemplate nothing but *parts*, and parts are all *little*! My mind feels as if it ached to behold and know something great, something *one* and *indivisible*. [ii]

I will not believe that it [*Life*] ceases — in this moving, stirring, and harmonious universe — I cannot believe it! Can cold and darkness come from the Sun? where the sun is not there is cold and darkness! But the living God is everywhere — and where is there room for death? [iii]

But although all my doubts are done away, though Christianity is my *passion*, it is too much my *intellectual* passion, and therefore will do me but little good in the hour of temptation and calamity. [iv]

I believe most steadfastly in original sin; that from our mothers' wombs our understandings are darkened; and even where our understandings are in the light, that our

GROWTH

organization is depraved and our volitions imperfect; and we sometimes see the good without wishing to attain it, and oftener *wish* it without the energy that wills and performs. And for this inherent depravity, I believe that the spirit of the Gospel is the sole cure; but permit me to add, that I look for the spirit of the Gospel 'neither in the [v] mountain, nor at Jerusalem'

Surely, religious Deism is infinitely nearer the religion of our Saviour than the gross idolatry of Popery, or the more decorous, but not less genuine, idolatry of a vast majority of Protestants. If there be meaning in words, it appears to me that the Quakers and Unitarians are the only Christians, altogether pure from idolatry . . . Even the worship of one God becomes Idolatry in my convictions, when, instead of the Eternal and Omnipresent, in whom we live and move and *have* our being, we set up a distinct Jehovah, tricked out in the anthropomorphic attributes of Time and *successive* Thoughts, and think of him as a *Person from* whom we *had* our Being . . . God is a Spirit, [vi] and must be worshipped in spirit. . . .

My creed is very simple — my confession of Faith very brief. I approve altogether and embrace entirely the *Religion* of the Quakers, but exceedingly dislike the *Sect*, and their own notions of their own *Religion*. By Quakerism I understand the opinions of George Fox rather than those [vii] of Barclay — who was the St. Paul of Quakerism.

2 PHILOSOPHY

After I had successively studied in the schools of Locke, Berkeley, Leibnitz, and Hartley, and could find in none of

PHILOSOPHY

them an abiding place for my reason, I began to ask myself: is a system of philosophy, as different from mere history and historic classification, possible? If possible, what are its necessary conditions? I was for a while disposed to answer the first question in the negative, and to admit that the sole practicable employment for the human mind was to observe, to collect, and to classify. . . . [i]

While my mind was thus perplexed, by a gracious providence for which I can never be sufficiently grateful, the generous and munificent patronage of Mr. Josiah, and Mr. Thomas Wedgwood enabled me to finish my education in Germany . . . I made the best use of my time and means; and there is therefore no period in my life on which I can look back with such unmingled satisfaction. . . . [ii]

I can not only honestly assert, but I can satisfactorily prove by reference to writings . . . that all the elements, the *differentials*, as the algebraists say, of my present opinions existed for me before I had ever seen a book of German Metaphysics, later than Wolf and Leibnitz, or could have read it, if I had. But what will this avail? A High German Transcendentalist I must be content to remain. . . . [iii]

[Excerpts from letters written during his residence in, and after his return from, Germany]:

What and who are these horrible shadows 'necessity' and 'general law' to which God himself must offer *sacrifices* — hecatombs of sacrifices? I feel a deep conviction that these shadows exist not — they are only the dreams of reasoning pride, that would fain find solutions for all difficulties without faith . . . God works in each for all — most true — but more comprehensively true is it that he works in all for each. I confess that the more I think, the more I am discontented with the doctrines of Priestley. [iv]

G R O W T H

If I do not greatly delude myself, I have not only completely extricated the notions of time and space but have overthrown the doctrine of association, as taught by Hartley, and with it all the irreligious metaphysics of [v] modern infidels — especially the doctrine of necessity.

I am here, in the vicinity of Durham, for the purpose of reading, from the Dean and Chapter's Library, an ancient of whom you may have heard, *Duns Scotus*! I mean to set the poor old Gemman on his feet again; and in order to wake him out of his present lethargy, I am burning Locke, Hume, and Hobbes under his nose. [vi] They stink worse than feather or assafoetida . . . I am confident that I can prove that the reputation of these three [vii] men has been wholly unmerited.

My opinion is thus: that deep thinking is only attainable by a man of deep feeling, and that all truth is a species [viii] of revelation . . . A metaphysical solution that does not instantly *tell* you something in the heart is grievously to be suspected as apocryphal. I almost think that ideas *never* recall ideas, as far as they are ideas, any more than the leaves in a forest create each other's motion. The breeze it is that runs through them — it is the soul, the state of feeling. If I had said no *one* idea ever recalls another, I am confident [ix] that I could support the assertion.

Newton was a mere materialist. *Mind*, in his system, is always *passive* — a *Lazy Looker-on* on an external world. If the mind be not *passive*, if it be indeed made in God's Image, and that too in the sublimest sense, the *Image of the Creator*, there is ground for suspicion that any system built on the passiveness of the mind must be false, as a [x] system. . . .

POLITICS

3 POLITICS

From what source are we to derive this strange phenomenon, that the young and the inexperienced who, we know by regular experience, are deceived in their religious antipathies and grow wiser; in their friendships and grow wiser; should, if once deceived in a question of abstract politics, cling to the error for ever and ever? . . . 'Once a Jacobin, always a Jacobin!' And why? Is it because the creed . . . is dazzling at sight to the young, the innocent, the disinterested, and to those who, judging of men in general from their own uncorrupted hearts, judge erroneously and expect unwisely? Is it because it deceives the mind in its purest and most flexible period? Is it because it is an error . . . against which all history is full of warning examples? Or is it because the experiment has been tried before our eyes and the error made palpable? . . . [i]

I am prepared to suffer without discontent the consequences of my follies and mistakes; and, unable to conceive how that which I am of God could have been without that which I have been of evil, it is withheld from me to regret anything. I therefore consent to be deemed a Democrat and a Seditious. A man's character follows him long after he has ceased to deserve it; but I have snapped my squeaking baby-trumpet of sedition, and the fragments lie scattered in the lumber-room of penitence. I wish to be a good man and a Christian, but I am no Whig, no Reformer, no Republican. [ii]

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(a) THE FRENCH REVOLUTION : THE SECOND PHASE

History has taught me that rulers are much the same in all ages, and under all forms of government; that they are as bad as they dare to be. The vanity of ruin and the curse of blindness have clung to them like an hereditary leprosy. Of the French Revolution, I can give my thoughts most adequately in the words of Scripture: 'A great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the Lord; but the Lord was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake; and after the earthquake a fire; and the Lord was not in the fire' . . .

FRANCE: AN ODE

1798

Forgive me, Freedom! O forgive those dreams!
I hear thy voice, I hear thy loud lament,
From bleak Helvetia's icy caverns sent —
I hear thy groans upon her blood-stained streams!
Heroes that for your peaceful country perished,
And ye that, fleeing, spot your mountain snows
With bleeding wounds; forgive me that I cherished
One thought that ever blessed your cruel foes!
To scatter rage and traitorous guilt,
Where peace her jealous home had built;
A patriot-race to disinherit
Of all that made their stormy wilds so dear;
And with inexpiable spirit
To taint the bloodless freedom of the mountaineer —

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O France, that mockest Heaven, adulterous, blind,
And patriot only in pernicious toils!
Are these thy boasts, Champion of human kind?
To mix with Kings in the low dust of sway,
Yell in the hunt, and share the murderous prey;
To insult the shrine of Liberty with spoils
From freemen torn; to tempt and to betray?
The Sensual and the Dark rebel in vain,
Slaves by their own compulsion! In mad game
They burst their manacles and wear the name
Of Freedom, graven on a heavier chain!
O Liberty! with profitless endeavour
Have I pursued thee, many a weary hour;
But thou nor swell'st the victor's strain, nor ever
Didst breathe thy soul in forms of human power.
Alike from all, how'er they praise thee,
(Nor prayer, nor boastful name delays thee)
Alike from Priestcraft's harpy minions,
And factious Blasphemy's obscener slaves,
Thou speedest on thy subtle pinions,
The guide of homeless winds, and playmate of the waves!
And there I felt thee! — on that sea-cliff's verge,
Whose pines, scarce travelled by the breeze above,
Had made one murmur with the distant surge!
Yes, while I stood and gazed, my temples bare,
And shot my being through earth, sea, and air,
Possessing all things with intensest love,
O Liberty! my spirit felt thee there.

[iv]

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(b) M E N A N D G O V E R N M E N T S

One good consequence which I expect from revolution is that individuals will see the necessity of individual effort; that they will act as good Christians, rather than as citizens and electors; and so by degrees will purge off that error, which to me appears as wild and more pernicious than the $\pi\acute{\alpha}\lambda\lambda\eta\rho\nu\sigma\omicron\nu$ and panacea of the alchemists, the error of attributing to governments a talismanic influence over our virtues and our happiness, as if governments were not rather effects than causes. It is true that all effects react and become causes, and so it must be in some degree with governments; but there are other agents which act more powerfully because by a nigher and more continuous agency, and it remains true that governments are more [v] the *effect* than the cause of that which we are.

... Some, belike,
Groaning with restless enmity, expect
All change from change of constituted power;
As if a Government had been a robe,
On which our vice and wretchedness were tagged
Like fancy-points and fringes, with the robe
Pulled off at pleasure. Fondly these attach
A radical causation to a few
Poor drudges of chastising Providence,
Who borrow all their hues and qualities
From our own folly and rank wickedness,
Which gave them birth and nursed them....

[vi]

(FEARS IN SOLITUDE, 1798)

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(C) JACOBINISM : OR RIGHTS BEFORE DUTIES

A Jacobin . . . is one who believes, and is disposed to act on the belief, that all or the greater part of the happiness or misery, virtue or vice of mankind depends on forms of government; who admits no form of government as either good or rightful which does not flow directly and formally from the persons governed; who — considering life, health, moral and intellectual improvement and liberty both of person and conscience as blessings which governments are bound as far as possible to increase and secure to every inhabitant, whether he has or not any fixed property, and moreover as blessings of infinitely greater value to each individual than the preservation of property can be to any individual — does consequently and consistently hold that every inhabitant who has attained the age of reason has a natural and inalienable right to an *equal* share of power in the choice of the governors. In other words, the Jacobin affirms that no legislature can be rightful or good which did not proceed from universal suffrage. In the power, and under the control, of a legislature so chosen he places all and everything, with the exception of the natural rights of man, and the means appointed for the preservation and exercise of these rights, by a direct vote of the nation itself — that is to say, by a constitution. Finally, the Jacobin deems it both justifiable and expedient to effect these requisite changes in faulty governments by absolute revolutions, and considers no violence as properly rebellious or criminal which are the *means* of giving to a nation the power of declaring and enforcing its sovereign will. . . .

Whoever builds a government on personal and natural

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rights is so far a Jacobin. Whoever builds on social rights, that is, hereditary rank, property, and long prescription, is an Anti-Jacobin, even though he should nevertheless be a republican or even a democrat . . . Milton was a pure republican, and yet his notions of government were highly aristocratic: Brutus was a republican, yet he perished in [vii] consequence of having killed the Jacobin, Caesar. . . .

(d) POLITICAL POWER PROPORTIONATE TO PROPERTY

We have repeatedly pressed upon the attention of our readers the impracticability of all theories founded on *personal rights*; we have contended zealously that the security and circulation of property, with political power proportioned to property, constitute a good government, and bring with them all other blessings which our imperfect nature [viii] can or ought to expect . . . The prejudice of superstition, birth, and hereditary right have been gradually declining during the four last centuries, and the empire of property establishing itself in their stead. Whether or no this, too, will not in a distant age submit to some more powerful principle, is indeed a subject fruitful in dreams to *poetic* philosophers who accuse themselves with reasonings on unknown quantities, but to all present purposes it is a useless and impertinent speculation. For the present race of men Governments must be founded on property; *that government is good in which property is secure and circulates; that government the best, which, in the exactest ratio, makes each* [ix] *man's power proportionate to his property. . . .*

Between the acknowledged truth that in all countries

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both governments and subjects have duties — duties both to themselves and each other — . . . between this truism and the Jacobinal doctrine of the universal inalienable right of all the inhabitants of every country to the exercise of their inherent sovereignty, there is no intermediate step, no middle meaning. [x]

(e) THE ENGLISH ARISTOCRACY

Our nobles in England, from the largeness of their landed estates, have an important stake in the immediate prosperity of their country; and, from the antiquity of their families, may be reasonably presumed likely to associate with it a more deeply-rooted and partial affection. By the more delicate superstition of ancestry they counteracted in former ages, and to a certain degree still counteract, the grosser superstitions of wealth . . . Has not the [xi] hereditary possession of a landed estate been proved by experience to generate dispositions equally favourable to loyalty and established freedom? [xii]

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(a) IN DEFENCE OF ENTHUSIASM

Woe to that man who, on circumstances which vitally affect the weal and woe of the whole human race, in time and for eternity, can reason in as cold-blooded a tone as if he were demonstrating a problem in geometry. The warmth

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which the development and disclosure of such truths occasions is altogether different from the heat of passion. . . . A complete tranquillity, a cold self-possession in the contemplation and defence of man's highest interests and most awful concerns, is the commencement of that depraved indifference, that deadness of the moral and religious sense, which . . . so easily passes into the brutal and stupid revolution-phrenzy, and then, having raved out its hour of madness, sinks to sleep in the strait-waistcoat of military [i] despotism.

(b) O N T H E C O N S T I T U T I O N O F T H E C O N S U L A T E : 1 7 9 9

The whole first chapter of the constitution, we do indeed consider as the mere ornamental outworks of a military despotism. No real power is left to the people. . . . The first chapter brings forward the undeniable truth that the government of France is to be an oligarchy supported, and only supportable, by the military, who are therefore placed entirely and absolutely under the command of the Chief Consul, Bonaparte; all which follows we regard as mere theatrical evolutions of a figure-dance. . . . If the French people accept, or rather submit to, this constitution, all danger from French principles is passed by; the volcano [ii] is burnt out and the snow has fallen round the crater. . . .

A Senate elected by Bonaparte and Sieyes can only be considered as the accomplices of Bonaparte and Sieyes. We are justified, therefore, in considering the Executive government and the Senate as one and the same body. This body possesses all the influence of France, appoints all the offices

throughout all the nation, civil and military, legislative or judicial, lucrative or honourable. Supposing that this vast and enormous influence were only powerful enough to bring in one man in ten among the candidates returned by the successive assemblies (a supposition absurd and incredible!) yet this would be still sufficient. The Senate, by choosing the tenth part of the candidates, might constitute a legislature entirely of its own creatures. The whole process of popular election is therefore a mere trick — a miserable *mâsquerade domino* to throw around the nakedness of despotism. . . . [iii]

Our readers have learnt that the candidates for all offices, national, departmental and those of the sub-departments, are to be gradually obtained by a series of honourable *decimations*. We have before objected to this system of election by primary, secondary and tertiary assemblies (in all which the same persons are at once candidates and voters) from its pernicious *moral* tendency. We believed, and we still continue to believe, that such an arrangement must necessarily tend to exasperate those *political* agitations so inseparable from important elections, by the super-addition of violent personal *passions*. If this has been proved to have been the case in the Primary assemblies under the former constitution, if those were found to generate and diffuse the spirit of intrigue and the disposition to innovation, the argument of course applies three-fold against the present constitution: a constitution, too, which makes such enormous sacrifices to the wish of producing stability and preventing innovation. In favour of this arrangement it may be said that it confirms and realizes two opposite advantages, and both of the highest importance. It takes from the people the all-unsettling power of acting from immediate and

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momentary impulses, while, at the same time, by the stimulation of hope and the sense of personal self-importance, it impels every individual to be a *citizen*, suffers no man to remain dead to the public interest, and thus elevates the selfish into a social principle without detriment to social [iv] peace. . . .

One error appears to us to pervade the whole, viz. the assumption that checks and counter-checks can be produced in legislative bodies merely by division of chambers and diversity of titles, where no real difference exists in the legislature, as individuals, except that transient one arising from their functions. It appears to us simply a skein of [v] threads, tangled rather than divided.

(C) B O N A P A R T E I N H I S R E L A T I O N S T O F R A N C E

It is too common to mistake for the causes of the late Revolution in France the accidents which determined the manner and moment of its explosion. The arrival of Bonaparte from Egypt, his ambition, his temerity, and his good luck, were indeed indispensable as occasions and subordinate agents; but would of themselves have been as powerless, and of as rapid extinction, as the sparks from a sky-rocket let off in a storm of rain. The real causes of the usurpation must be sought for in the general state of the public feeling and opinion; in the necessity of giving concentration and permanence to the executive government; and in the increasing conviction that it had become good policy to exchange the forms of political freedom for the realities of civil security, in order to make a real political freedom possible at some

future period. The reasons for preferring a new power under a new title to the restoration of monarchy were many and irrefragible.

First, the attempt could be realized without any approximation to that most dreadful of all revolutions, a revolution of property; a fact, the knowledge and deep feeling of which attach all the new rich men to the Chief Consulate. Now in all great cities in all countries, much more therefore in a revolutionary country, the possessors of wealth newly acquired will be more powerful than men of hereditary wealth, because they are more pliant, because they are more active, and because in consequence of having experienced a greater variety of scene and circumstance they have collectively more talent and information. Add to this, that in France the men of hereditary wealth are of very various creeds respecting the restoration of monarchy; but the new rich men *can* have but one creed on that subject, and of that one creed they are not only unwavering believers but likewise zealous apostles.

Secondly, a Chief Consulate admitted a choice of person; a circumstance of incalculable significance in the present affairs of France . . . In conniving at the usurpation of Bonaparte, they have seated on the throne of the Republic a man of various talent, of commanding genius, of splendid exploit, from whose policy the peaceful adherents of the old religion anticipate toleration; from whose real opinions and habits the men of letters and philosophy are assured of patronage; in whose professional attachment and individual associations the military, and the men of military talent, look confidently for the exertions of a comrade and a brother; and finally in whose uninterrupted felicity the multitude find an object of superstition and enthusiasm. . . .

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Thirdly, a Chief Consulate was the only conceivable means of uniting the parties in France, or at least of suspending their struggles. . . .

These seem to us the causes which placed Bonaparte in the Chief Consulate. Of his own share in that event we have repeatedly declared our abhorrence; but it is required of us by truth and common justice to admit that since then his interests, and those of his country and of Europe, have run completely parallel. The first and chief article of the test required of those whom Bonaparte employs in the service of the republic is, not that they shall have such and such opinions, but that they shall assent to the necessity of suspending the operation of such and such opinions wherein they run counter to the existing circumstances. By this toleration he has collected around his immediate interests all the talent of France; and as man is a placable being, as abstract notions give way to surrounding realities, as assumed opinions soon become real ones . . . it is probable that by this toleration he may really reconcile those whom he had brought together and convert this armistice of factions into a permanent peace . . . In this usurpation, Bonaparte stabbed his honesty in the vitals; it has perished — we admit that it has perished — but the mausoleum where [vi] it lies interred is among the wonders of the world. . . .

He is a despot indeed, but not a tyrant . . . Bonaparte has buried under his new constitution the principles of revolution; but he excites the hopes of almost all descriptions of men . . . He has palsied the hostility of all parties, if he has gained the enthusiastic support of none. His is a government of experiment rather than of popularity. His object is to give tranquillity and gain the confidence of temperate, wise men, rather than to fanaticize factions and to rule by

public delirium . . . Whether he will act with true greatness and make the happiness of the nation, rather than personal power, his object, is a question which time alone can decide. Upon that question depends the character of his present conduct. If it be necessary for the public welfare to deposit the whole authority of the state in the hands of one man, Bonaparte is the person of all others to whom such a trust should be confided. He is without a rival in renown; no one can attempt to cope with him in personal influence; his great genius points him out as the man who is best able to restore to France peace and prosperity; and to give repose and confidence to Europe. If his virtues be as great as his genius, he may do for the old world what Washington has done for the new. [vii]

(d) ON THE DESIRABILITY OF PEACE
WITH FRANCE: 1800

The public will not be persuaded that because the French government is an usurpation, a despotism, or a tyranny, we therefore must prosecute the war. This was not the argument of ministers themselves on former occasions. They contended that the war was justifiable to extinguish French principles and reduce French power; but they always disavowed any determination to persevere merely to change the *form* of the French Government. Their motives for rejecting overtures of peace, at this period must therefore be an opinion that the principles of the present government in France are dangerous to surrounding states, or that they have a certain prospect of reducing her power. In our paper of yesterday we endeavoured to prove that wild

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Jacobin principles having received a mortal blow by the last revolution, can be no longer dangerous; and that prospects of conquest from France will prove delusive, the history of the war gives too much reason to dread. These, therefore, are unwise motives for continuing hostilities.

But we are told that France is insincere in professing a desire for peace! If that were known to be the fact, ministers would certainly treat with her, since they would again secure the support of the British people in the war, and expose the ambition of the enemy. We rather suspect that ministers know France *is sincere*, and are apprehensive a negotiation would either entrap them into a peace, or show in a forcible manner how desperately and unreasonably they are bent on the further prosecution of the war. No period was ever more favourable than the present for [viii] accommodation and adjustment. . . .

War against France as a republic, produces in the French republic ambition and insolence by its failure, and Jacobinism by its success; nor is this difficult of explanation. When a nation is in safety, men think of their private interests; individual property becomes the predominating principle, the lord of the ascendant; and all politics and theories inconsistent with property and individual interest give way, and sink into a decline, which, unless unnaturally stimulated, would end in speedy dissolution.— But is the nation in danger? Every man is called into play; every man feels his interest as a *citizen* predominating over his individual interests; the high and the low and the middle classes become all alike politicians; the majority carry the day; and Jacobinism is the natural consequence. Let us not be deceived by words. Every state in which all the inhabitants without distinction of property are roused to the exertion of a public

spirit, is for the time a Jacobin state. France at present is only *preparing* to become so. — If the present consulate can conclude a peace, the glory attached to it will, for a while, reconcile the people to an Oligarchy, which can only exist while it is popular; and as manufactures and commerce revive, the spirit of property will regain its ascendancy, and the government of France will be modified accordingly. . . . [ix]

Bonaparte deserted the gallant army which his own ambition had led into Egypt, and, on his return into France, instead of the death which was due to him, he procured the unshared possession of the supreme power. Bonaparte is a fugitive and a deserter. These are our opinions; and in a tranquil season, these would be the opinions of Frenchmen. It will remain to ministers and their allies to menace the republic, till the love of liberty is suspended by the sense of national danger; to alarm and confuse the minds of its inhabitants, till they consider the very crime of their usurper only as traces of an high and mysterious destiny; till in their distempered imaginations his flight from Egypt becomes a call from heaven for the saving of his country. . . . [x]

Let these conjectures be well-founded, or without foundation, there remains enough to fear, and nothing to hope, from the war. It has already transferred the whole trade of Europe into our hands, and it can do no more; if we conclude a peace, the surplus of our revenues may be applied successfully to the diminution of our national debt . . . War, we repeat, can do no more for us than it has already done: and the longer it is prolonged the heavier will be the burthens which it will leave behind it. . . . We may, indeed, make ourselves masters of new colonies; but this would only substitute the *en-bon-point* of dropsy for the muscular habit of health, if indeed it be not already substituted. . . . [xi]

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The renewal of a vigorous trading and commercial spirit in France would, at first, be a benefit and a stimulus, even to our commerce; but it would be still more importantly beneficial, both to us and to the quiet of all Europe, in a political light, by giving the death-blow to Jacobinism, by reviving all the wholesome and Anti-Revolutionary influences of property, and by the assimilation of the pursuits and feelings of the French nation to our own, which must infallibly end in assimilating the *spirit* of their government to that of our own. . . .

But on the supposition that by a perpetual continuance of the war, or by a restoration of despotism, or by any other means, we could be and remain the monopolists of the commerce of Europe, is it quite ascertained that it would be a real *national* advantage? Is it quite certain that the conditions and morals of the lower and more numerous classes would not be progressively deteriorated? Is it quite certain that it would not give such a superiority to the moneyed interest of the country over the landed as might be fatal to our constitution? Has not the hereditary possession of a landed estate been proved by experience to generate dispositions equally favourable to loyalty and established freedom? Has not the same experience proved that the moneyed men are far more malleable materials? that ministers find more and more easy ways of obliging them, and that they are more willing to go with a minister through evil and good? Our commerce has been, it is said, nearly trebled since the war; is the nation at large the happier? Have the schemes of internal navigation, and of rendering waste lands useful, proceeded with their former energy? Or have not loans and other ministerial job-work created injurious and perhaps vicious objects for moneyed specula-

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tions? — And what mean these Committees for the labouring poor? These numerous soup-establishments? These charities so kindly and industriously set on foot through the whole kingdom? All these are highly honourable to the rich of this country! But are they equally honourable to the nation at large? — Is that a genuine prosperity, in which healthy labourers are commonly styled ‘the labouring *poor*’ and industrious manufacturers obliged to be fed like Roman clients or Neapolitan Lazzaroni? . . . Let us not forget that commerce is still no otherwise valuable than as the means to an end, and ought not itself to become the end, to which nobler and more inherent blessings are to be forced into subserviency.

[xiii]

FEARS IN SOLITUDE

1798

Even so, my countrymen! have we gone forth
And borne to distant tribes slavery and pangs,
And, deadlier far, our vices, whose deep taint
With slow perdition murders the whole man,
His body and his soul! Meanwhile, at home,
All individual dignity and power
Engulfed in Courts, Committees, Institutions,
Associations and Societies,
A vain, speech-mouthing, speech-reporting Guild,
One Benefit-Club for mutual flattery,
We have drunk up, demure as at a grace,
Pollutions from the brimming cup of wealth;
Contemptuous of all honourable rule,
Yet bartering freedom and the poor man’s life
For gold, as at a market! . . .

[xiv]

G R O W T H

(e) M R . P I T T

William Pitt was the younger son of Lord Chatham; a fact of no ordinary importance in the solution of his character, of no mean significance in the heraldry of morals and intellect. His father's rank, fame, political connections, and parental ambition were his mould—he was cast, rather than grew. A palpable election, a conscious predestination controlled the free agency, and transfigured the individuality of his mind; and that, which he *might have been*, was compelled into that, which *he was to be*. From his early childhood it was his father's custom to make him stand on a chair, and declaim before a large company; by which exercise, practised so frequently, and continued for so many years, he acquired a premature and unnatural dexterity in the combination of words, which must of necessity have diverted his attention from present objects, obscured his impressions, and deadened his genuine feelings. Not the *thing* on which he was speaking, but the praises to be gained by the speech, were present to his intuition; hence he associated all the operations of his faculties with words, and his pleasures with the surprise excited by them.

But an inconceivably large portion of human knowledge and human power is involved in the science and management of *words*; and an education of words, though it destroys genius, will often create, and always foster talent. The young Pitt was conspicuous far beyond his fellows, both at school and at college. He was always full grown: he had neither the promise nor the awkwardness of a growing intellect. Vanity, early satiated, formed and elevated itself into a love of power; and in losing this colloquial vanity he

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lost one of the prime links that connect the individual with the species, too early for the affections though not too early for the understanding. At college he was a severe student; his mind was founded and elemented in words and generalities, and these too formed all the super-structure. That revelry and debauchery, which are so often fatal to the powers of intellect, would probably have been serviceable to him; they would have given him a closer communion with realities, they would have induced a greater presentness to present objects. But Mr. Pitt's conduct was correct. . . .

His first political connections were with the Reformers, but those who accuse him of sympathizing or coalescing with their intemperate or visionary plans, misunderstand his character, and are ignorant of the historical facts. Imaginary situations in an imaginary state of things rise up in minds that possess a power of facility in combining images. — Mr. Pitt's ambition was conversant with old situations in the old state of things, which furnished nothing to the imagination, though much to the wishes. In his endeavours to realize his father's plan of reform, he was probably as sincere as a being, who had derived so little knowledge from actual impressions, could be. But his sincerity had no living root of affection; while it was propped up by his love of praise and immediate power, so long it stood erect and no longer. He became a member of the parliament — supported the popular opinions, and in a few years, by the influence of the popular party was placed in that high and awful rank in which he now is. The fortunes of his country, we had almost said, the fates of the world, were placed in his wardship — we sink in prostration before the inscrutable dispensations of providence, when we reflect in whose wardship the fates of the world were placed!

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The influencer of his country and his species was a young man, the creature of another's predetermination, sheltered and weather-fended from all the elements of experience; a young man, whose feet had never wandered; whose very eye had never turned to the right or to the left; whose whole track had been as curveless as the motion of a fascinated reptile! It was a young man, whose heart was solitary, because he had existed always amid objects of futurity, and whose imagination too was unpopulous, because those objects of hope, to which his habitual wishes had transferred, and as it were *projected* his existence, were all familiar and long established objects! — A plant sown and reared in a hot-house, for whom the very air that surrounded him, had been regulated by the thermometer of previous purpose; to whom the light of nature had penetrated only through glasses and covers; who had had the sun without the breeze; whom no storm had shaken; on whom no rain had pattered; on whom the dews of heaven had not fallen! — A being, who had had no feelings connected with man or nature, no spontaneous impulses, no unbiassed and desultory studies, no genuine science, nothing that constitutes individuality in intellect, nothing that teaches brotherhood in affection! Such was the man — such and so denaturalized the spirit, on whose wisdom and philanthropy the lives and living enjoyments of so many millions of human beings were made unavoidably dependent. From this time a real enlargement of mind became almost impossible.

Still, however, Mr. Pitt's situation, however inauspicious for his real being, was favourable to his fame. He heaped period on period; persuaded himself and the nation, that extemporaneous arrangement of sentences was eloquence;

and that eloquence implied wisdom. His father's struggles for freedom, and his own attempts, gave him an almost unexampled popularity; and his office necessarily associated with his name all the great events, that happened during his administration. There were not however wanting men, who saw through this delusion; and refusing to attribute the industry, integrity, and enterprising spirit of our merchants, the agricultural improvements of our landholders, the great inventions of our manufacturers, or the valour and skilfulness of our sailors, to the merits of a minister, they have continued to decide on his character from those acts and those merits, which belong to him and to him alone. Judging him by this standard, they have been able to discover in him no one proof or symptom of a commanding genius. They have discovered him never controlling, never creating, events, but always yielding to them with rapid change, and sheltering himself from inconsistency by perpetual indefiniteness.

And now came the French revolution. This was a new event; the old routine of reasoning, the common trade of politics were to become obsolete. He appeared wholly unprepared for it: half favouring, half condemning, ignorant of what he favoured, and why he condemned, he neither displayed the honest enthusiasm and fixed principle of Mr. Fox, nor the intimate acquaintance with the general nature of man, and the consequent *prescience* of Mr. Burke.

After the declaration of war, long did he continue in the common cant of office, in declamation about the Scheldt and Holland, and all the vulgar causes of common contests! and when at last the immense genius of his new supporter had beat him out of these *words* (words signifying places

and dead objects, and signifying nothing more), he adopted other words in their places, other generalities — Atheism and Jacobinism — phrases which he learnt from Mr. Burke, but without learning the Philosophical definitions and involved consequences, with which the great man accompanied those words. Since the death of Mr. Burke, the forms and the sentiments, and the tone of the French have undergone many and important changes: how indeed, is it possible that it should be otherwise, while man is the creature of experience? But still Mr. Pitt proceeds in 'an endless repetition of the same *general phrases*. This is his element; deprive him of general and abstract phrases, and you reduce him to silence. But you cannot deprive him of them. Press him to specify an *individual* fact of advantage to be derived from a war, and he answers, security! Call upon him to particularize a crime, and he exclaims — Jacobinism! Abstractions defined by abstractions! Generalities defined by generalities! As a minister of finance, he is still, as ever, the man of words and abstractions! Figures, custom-house reports, imports and exports, commerce and revenue — all flourishing, all splendid! Never was such a prosperous country as England under his administration! Let it be objected that the agriculture of the country is, by the overbalance of commerce, and by various and complex causes, in such a state that the country hangs as a pensioner for bread on its neighbours,¹ and a bad season uniformly threatens us with famine — This (it is replied) is owing to our PROSPERITY — all *prosperous* nations are in great distress for food! — still PROSPERITY, still GENERAL PHRASES, unenforced by one *single image*, one

¹ See *Table Talk*, ed. cit., pp. 306-7: 'The nation that cannot even subsist without the commodity of another nation, is in effect the slave of that other nation.'

single fact of real national amelioration; of any one comfort enjoyed where it was not before enjoyed; of any one class of society becoming healthier, wiser, or happier. These are *things*, these are realities; and these Mr. Pitt has neither the imagination to body forth, nor the sensibility to feel for. Once, indeed, in an evil hour, intriguing for popularity, he suffered himself to be persuaded to evince a talent for the Real, the Individual; and he brought in his POOR BILL! When we hear the minister's talent for finance so loudly trumpeted, we turn involuntarily to his POOR BILL — to that acknowledged abortion — that unanswerable evidence of his ignorance respecting all the fundamental relations and actions of property, and of the social union!

As his reasonings, even so is his eloquence. One character pervades his whole being. Words on words, finely arranged, and so dexterously consequent, that the whole bears the semblance of argument, and still keeps awake a sense of surprise; but when all is done, nothing remarkable has been said; no one philosophical remark, no one image, not even a pointed aphorism. Not a sentence of Mr. Pitt's has ever been quoted, or formed the favourite phrase of the day — a thing unexampled in any man of equal reputation. . . .

Such appears to us to be the Prime Minister of Great Britain, whether we consider him as a statesman or as an orator. The same character betrays itself in his private life; the same coldness to realities, and to all whose excellence relates to reality. He has patronized no science, he has raised no man of genius from obscurity; he counts no one prime work of God among his friends. From the same source he has no attachment to female society, no fondness for children, no perceptions of beauty in natural scenery; but he is fond of convivial indulgences, of that stimulation,

G R O W T H

which, keeping up the glow of self-importance and the sense of internal power, gives feelings without the mediation of ideas.

These are the elements of his mind; the accidents of his fortune, the circumstances that enabled such a mind to acquire and retain such a power, would form a subject of a philosophical history, and that too of no scanty size. We can scarcely furnish the chapter of contents to a work which would comprise subjects so important and delicate as the causes of the diffusion and intensity of secret influence; the machinery and state intrigue of marriages; the overbalance of the commercial interest; the panic of property struck by the late revolution; the short-sightedness of the careful; the carelessness of the far-sighted; and all those many and various events which have given to a decorous profession of religion, and a seemliness of private morals such an unwonted weight in the attainment and preservation of public power. We are unable to determine whether it be more consolatory or humiliating to human nature, that so many complexities of event, situation, character, age, and country, should be necessary in order to the production [xv] of a Mr. Pitt.

(f) THE SPANISH RESISTANCE TO BONAPARTE: 1809

This is not a quarrel of governments, but a cause, which, involving the most sacred *social* claims of mankind, neither bewilders us on the one hand with visionary speculations of *natural rights*; nor like the former continental wars saddens us on the other with the uncomfortable thought that *bad*

is the best, and that even the success of the *better* cause would merely preserve *the people at large* from a yet more deplorable state than they had endured under their former governors. Besides, the Spanish contest has a separate and additional interest for Englishmen of genuine English principles: for if the peace of Amiens made the nation unanimous in its dread of French *ambition*, it was the noble efforts of Spanish patriotism that first restored us, without distinction of party, to our characteristic enthusiasm for *liberty*; and, presenting it in its genuine form, incapable of being confounded with its French counterfeit, enabled us once more to utter the names of our Hampdens, Sidneyes and Russels, without hazard of alarming the quiet subject, or of offending the zealous loyalist. [xvi]

(g) BONAPARTE : 1809

...I have styled the present ruler of France a Wretch and a Monster, but on what occasion? Were these phrases provoked by his *Veni-vidi-vici* victories over the armies of Russia, Prussia, and Austria? No! I have denounced him as a remorseless tyrant and the enemy of the human race. But was it because he had sworn the ruin of Great Britain, and had exhausted all the resources of his stupendous power in preparations for its invasion? No! I exulted, indeed, that his army of England lay encamped on his coasts like wolves baying at the moon, and that he is condemned to behold his vast flotillas as worthless and idle as the seaweed that rots around their keels. I exulted, indeed, as became a Briton; but I neither reviled nor even blamed him. But that in order to gratify his rage against one country, he

made light of the ruin of his own subjects; that to undermine the resources of one enemy, he would reduce the Continent of Europe to a state of barbarism, and by a remorseless suspension of the commercial system, destroy the principal source of civilization, and abolish a *middle-class* throughout Christendom; for this, Sir, and for the murder of Palm, and for the torture and private assassination of Wright, of Pichegru, and Toussaint (the latter a hero as much his superior in genius as in goodness); for his remorseless behaviour to the Swiss and to the Tyrolese, and for his hatred of liberty everywhere; and lastly for his ingratitude, perfidy, baseness, and fiend-like cruelty, for this amalgam of all the vices, in the one vice of his conduct towards Spain. I have spoken of him, and of his power, with abhorrence, because it is only by a clear conception of its foul and dark [xvii] foundations that this power can be effectually resisted . . . This cannot lie in vice as vice, for all injustice is in itself feebleness and disproportion; but, as I have elsewhere observed, the abandonment of all principle of right enables the soul to choose and act upon a principle of wrong, and to subordinate to this one principle all the various vices of human nature. Hence, too, the means of accomplishing a given end are multiplied incalculably, because all means are considered as lawful. He who has once said with his whole heart, Evil, be thou my good! has removed a world of obstacles by the very decision that he will have no obstacles [xviii] but those of force and brute matter.

and dead objects, and signifying nothing more), he adopted other words in their places, other generalities — Atheism and Jacobinism — phrases which he learnt from Mr. Burke, but without learning the Philosophical definitions and involved consequences, with which the great man accompanied those words. Since the death of Mr. Burke, the forms and the sentiments, and the tone of the French have undergone many and important changes: how indeed, is it possible that it should be otherwise, while man is the creature of experience? But still Mr. Pitt proceeds in 'an endless repetition of the same *general phrases*. This is his element; deprive him of general and abstract phrases, and you reduce him to silence. But you cannot deprive him of them. Press him to specify an *individual* fact of advantage to be derived from a war, and he answers, security! Call upon him to particularize a crime, and he exclaims — Jacobinism! Abstractions defined by abstractions! Generalities defined by generalities! As a minister of finance, he is still, as ever, the man of words and abstractions! Figures, custom-house reports, imports and exports, commerce and revenue — all flourishing, all splendid! Never was such a prosperous country as England under his administration! Let it be objected that the agriculture of the country is, by the overbalance of commerce, and by various and complex causes, in such a state that the country hangs as a pensioner for bread on its neighbours,¹ and a bad season uniformly threatens us with famine — This (it is replied) is owing to our PROSPERITY — all *prosperous* nations are in great distress for food! — still PROSPERITY, still GENERAL PHRASES, unenforced by one *single image*, one

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G R O W T H

Lest some mad Devil suddenly unhamp'ring,
Slap-dash! the imp should fly off with the steeple,
On revolutionary broom-stick scampering. —

[x] O ye soft-headed and soft-hearted people . . .

.

THE DEVIL'S THOUGHTS

1799

From his brimstone bed at break of day
A walking the Devil has gone,
To visit his snug little farm the earth,
And see how his stock goes on.

.

Down the river did glide, with wind and tide,
A pig with vast celerity;
And the Devil look'd wise as he saw how the while,
It cut its own throat. 'There' quoth he with a smile,
'Goes "England's commercial prosperity".'

.

He saw an old acquaintance
As he passed by a Methodist meeting; —
She holds a consecrated key,
And the Devil nods her a greeting.

She turned up her nose and said,
'Avaunt! my name's Religion,'
And she looked to Mr. —
And leered like a love-sick pigeon.

HIS OWN TIMES

He saw a certain minister
 (A minister to his mind)
Go up into a certain House,
 With a majority behind.

The Devil quoted Genesis
 Like a very learned clerk,
How 'Noah and his creeping things
 Went up into the Ark.'

[xx]

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TALLEYRAND TO LORD GRENVILLE

A METRICAL EPISTLE,

1800

.

My Lord! I've the honour to be Talleyrand,
And the letter's from *me*! You'll not draw back your hand
Nor yet take it up by the rim in dismay,
As boys pick up ha'pence on April fool-day.
I'm no Jacobin foul, or red-hot Cordelier
That your Lordship's *ungau*ntleted fingers need fear
An infection or burn! Believe me, 'tis true,
With a scorn like another I look down on the crew
That bawl and hold up to the mob's detestation
The most delicate wish for a *silent persuasion*.
A form long-establish'd these Terrorists call
Bribes, perjury, theft, and the devil and all!
And yet spite of all that the Moralist prates,
'Tis the keystone and cement of *civilized States*.

.

G R O W T H

My Lord! though the vulgar in wonder be lost at
My transfigurations, and name me *Apostate*,
Such a meaningless nick-name, which never incens'd me,
Cannot prejudice you and your cousin against me;
I'm Ex-bishop. What then? Burke himself would agree
That I left not the Church — 'twas the Church that left me.

.

But perhaps, dear my Lord, among other worse crimes,
The whole was no more than a lie of *The Times*.
It is monstrous, my Lord! in a civiliz'd state
That such Newspaper rogues should have license to prate.
Indeed printing in general — but for the taxes,
Is in theory false and pernicious in praxis!
You and I, and your Cousin, and Abbé Sieyes,
And all the great Statesmen that live in these days,
Are agreed that no nation secure is from vi'lence
Unless all who must think are maintain'd all in silence.
This printing, my Lord — but 'tis useless to mention
What we both of us think — 'twas a cursed invention,
And Germany might have been honestly prouder
[xxi] Had she left it alone, and found out only powder.

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PART THREE

MATURITY

(1809-1834)

*Locke says four and five are nine. Now I say,
that four and five are not nine, but that they
will make nine.*

(‘TABLE TALK’: Aug. 24, 1831)

I RELIGION

(a) CONFESSIO FIDEI: NOVEMBER 3RD, 1816

I. I believe that I am a freeagent, inasmuch as, and so far as, I have a will, which renders me justly responsible for my actions, omissive as well as commissive. Likewise that I possess reason, or a law of right and wrong, which, uniting with my sense of moral responsibility, constitutes the voice of conscience.

II. Hence it becomes my absolute duty to believe, and I do believe, that there is a God, that is, a Being, in whom supreme reason and a most holy will are one with an infinite power; and that all holy will is coincident with the will of God, and therefore secure in its ultimate consequences by His omnipotence; — having, if such similitude be not unlawful, such a relation to the goodness of the Almighty as a perfect time-piece will have to the sun.

COROLLARY

The wonderful works of God in the sensible world are a perpetual discourse, reminding me of His existence and shadowing out to me His perfections. But as all language presupposes in the intelligent hearer or reader those primary notions which it symbolizes . . . even so I believe that the notion of God is essential to the human mind; that it is called forth into distinct consciousness principally by the

MATURITY

conscience, and auxiliarly by the manifest adaptation of means to ends in the outward creation. It is therefore evident to my reason that the existence of God is absolutely and necessarily insusceptible of a scientific demonstration, and that Scripture has so represented it. . . .

III. My conscience forbids me to propose to myself the pains and pleasures of this life as the primary motive or ultimate end of my actions; — on the contrary it makes me perceive an utter disproportionateness and heterogeneity between the acts of the spirit, as virtue and vice, and the things of the sense, such as all earthly rewards and punishments must be. Its hopes and fears, therefore, refer me to a different and spiritual state of being: and I believe in the life to come, not through arguments acquired by my understanding or discursive faculty, but chiefly and effectively, because so to believe is my duty, and in obedience to the commands of my conscience. . . .

IV. I believe, and hold it as the fundamental article of Christianity, that I am a fallen creature; that I am of myself capable of moral evil, but not of myself capable of moral good, and that an evil ground existed in my will, previously to any given act, or assignable moment of time, in my consciousness. I am born a child of wrath. This fearful mystery I pretend not to understand. I cannot even conceive the possibility of it, but I know that it is so. My conscience, the sole fountain of certainty, commands me to believe it, and would itself be a contradiction were it not so — and what is real must be possible.

V. I receive with full and grateful faith the assurance of revelation, that the Word, which is from all eternity with God, and is God, assumed our human nature in order to redeem me and all mankind from this our connate cor-

RELIGION

ruption. My reason convinces me that no other mode of redemption is conceivable. . . .

VI. I believe that this assumption of humanity by the Son of God was revealed and realized to us by the Word made flesh, and manifested to us in Christ Jesus; and that his miraculous birth, his agony, his crucifixion, death, resurrection and ascension, were all both symbols of our redemption . . . and necessary parts of the awful process.

VII. I believe in the descent and sending of the Holy Spirit, by whose free grace, obtained for me by my Redeemer, I can alone be sanctified and restored from my natural inheritance of sin and condemnation, be a child of God, and an inheritor of the Kingdom of God. [i]

(b) ESSAY ON FAITH

Faith may be defined as fidelity to our own being — so far as such being is not and cannot become an object of the senses. . . .

That I am conscious of something within me peremptorily commanding me to do unto others as I would they should do unto me; — in other words, a categorical (that is, primary and unconditional) imperative; that the maxim (*regula maxima* or supreme rule) of my actions, both inward and outward, should be such as I could, without any contradiction arising therefrom, will to be the law of all moral and rational beings; — this, I say, is a fact of which I am no less conscious (though in a different way) nor less assured, than I am of any appearance presented by my outward senses. Nor is this all; but in the very act of being conscious

MATURITY

of this in my own nature, I know that it is a fact of which all men either are, or ought to be, conscious. . . .

Well, this we have affirmed is a fact of which every honest man is as fully assured as of his seeing, hearing or smelling. But though the former assurance does not differ from the latter in the degree, it is altogether diverse in the kind; the senses being morally passive, while the conscience is essentially connected with the will . . . Thence we call the presentations of the senses impressions, those of the conscience commands or dictates. In the senses we find our receptivity, and as far as our personal being is concerned, we are passive; — but in the fact of the conscience we are not only agents, but it is by this alone that we know ourselves to be such: nay, that our very passiveness in this latter is an act of passiveness, and that we are patient (*patientes*) — not, as in the other case, *simply* passive. . . .

It appears then that even the very first step, that the initiation of the process, the becoming conscious of a conscience, partakes of the nature of an act. It is an act, in and by which we take upon ourselves an allegiance, and consequently the obligation of fealty; and this fealty or fidelity implying the power of being unfaithful, it is the first and fundamental sense of Faith. . . .

Soon, however, experience comes into play. We learn that there are other impulses besides the dictates of conscience; that there are powers within us and without us ready to usurp the throne of conscience, and busy in tempting us to transfer our allegiance. We learn that there are many things contrary to conscience, and therefore to be rejected and utterly excluded, and many that can co-exist with its supremacy only by being subjugated as beasts of burthen; and others again, as for instance the social tender-

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ness and affections, and the faculties and excitations of the intellect, which must be at least subordinated. The preservation of our loyalty and fealty under these trials and against these rivals constitutes the second sense of Faith. . . .

Next we seek for that rightful superior on our duties to whom all our duties to all other superiors, on our faithfulness to whom all our bounden relations to all other objects of fidelity, are founded. We must inquire after that duty in which all others find their several degrees and dignities, and from which they derive their obligative force. We are to find a superior whose rights, including our duties, are presented to the mind in the very idea of that Supreme Being, whose sovereign prerogatives are predicates implied in the subjects, as the essential properties of a circle are co-assumed in the first assumption of a circle . . . In this sense, then, faith is fidelity, fealty, allegiance of the moral nature, to God, in opposition to all usurpation and in resistance to all temptation to the placing any other claim above or equal without fidelity to God.

The will of God is the last ground and final aim of all our duties, and to that the whole man is to be harmonized by subordination, subjugation or suppression alike in commission and omission. But the will of God, which is one with the supreme intelligence, is revealed to man through the conscience. But the conscience, which consists in an inappellable bearing-witness to the truth, may legitimately be construed with the term reason . . . This brings me to the last and fullest sense of Faith, as the obedience of the individual will to the reason. . . .

Thus then to conclude. Faith consists in the synthesis of the reason and the individual will. By virtue of the latter

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therefore it must be an energy, and inasmuch as it relates to the whole moral man, it must be exerted in each and all of his constituents or incidents, faculties and tendencies; — it must be a total, not a partial; a continuous, not a desultory or occasional energy . . . And by virtue of the former, that is, reason, faith must be a light, a form of knowing, a beholding of truth. In the incomparable words of the Evangelist, therefore — *faith must be a light originating in the Logos, or the substantial reason, which is co-eternal and one with the Holy Will, and which light is at the same time the life of men.* Now as life is here the sum or collective of all moral and spiritual acts, in suffering, doing and being, so is faith the source and the sum, the energy and the principle of the fidelity of man to God, by the subordination of his human will, in all provinces of his nature, to his reason, as the sum of spiritual truth, representing and manifesting the will [ii] Divine.

(C) REASON, RELIGION, AND THE WILL

The reason first manifests itself in man by the tendency to the comprehension of all as one. We can neither rest in an infinite that is not at the same time a whole, nor in a whole that is not infinite. Hence the natural man is always in a state either of resistance or of captivity to the understanding and the fancy, which cannot represent totality without limit: and he either loses the one in the striving after the infinite, that is, atheism with or without polytheism, or he loses the infinite in the striving after the one, and then sinks into anthropomorphic monotheism. The rational instinct, therefore, taken abstractedly and unbalanced, did, in itself . . .

RELIGION

form the original temptation through which man fell: and in all ages has continued to originate the same, even from Adam, in whom we all fell, to the atheists who deified the human reason in the person of a harlot during the earlier period of the French Revolution.

To this tendency, therefore, religion, as the consideration of the particular and individual (in which respect it takes up and identifies with itself the excellence of the understanding) but of the individual as it exists and has its being in the universal (in which respect it is one with the pure reason) — to this tendency, I say, religion assigns the due limits. . . .

There exists in the human being, at least in man fully developed, no mean symbol of tri-unity in reason, religion and the will. For each of the three, though a distinct agency implies and demands the other two, and loses its own nature at the moment that from distinction it passes into division or separation. The perfect frame of man is the perfect frame of a state: and in the light of this idea we must read Plato's *Republic*.

The comprehension, impartiality and far-sightedness of reason (the legislative of our nature), taken singly and exclusively, becomes mere visionariness in intellect, and indolence or hard-heartedness in morals. It is the science of cosmopolitanism without country, of philanthropy without neighbourliness or consanguinity, in short, of all the impostures of that philosophy of the French Revolution, which would sacrifice each to the shadowy idol of all. For Jacobinism is *monstrum hybridum*, made up in part of despotism, or the lust of rule grounded in selfness; and in part of abstract reason misapplied to objects that belong entirely to experience and the understanding. Its instincts and mode of action are in strict correspondence with its origin. In all

M A T U R I T Y

places, Jacobinism betrays its mixed parentage and nature by applying to the brute passions and physical force of the multitude (that is, to man as a mere animal) in order to build up government and the frame of society on natural rights instead of social privileges, on the universals of abstract reason instead of positive institutions, the lights of specific experience and the modifications of existing circumstances. Right, in its most proper sense, is the creature of law and statute, and only in the technical language of the courts has it any substantial and independent sense. In morals, right is a word without meaning except as the correlative of duty.

From all this it follows that reason, as the science of all as a whole, must be interpenetrated by a power that represents the concentration of all in each — a power that acts by a contraction of universal truths into individual duties, such contraction being the only form in which those truths can attain life and reality. Now this is religion, which is the executive of our nature, and on this account the name of highest dignity, and the symbol of sovereignty. . . .

Yet even religion itself, if ever in its too exclusive devotion to the specific and individual, it neglects to interpose the contemplation of the universal, changes its being into superstition, and becoming more and more earthly and servile, as more and more estranged from the one in all, goes wandering at length with its pack of amulets, bead-rolls . . . and the like pedlary, on pilgrimages to Loretto, Mecca, or the temple of Juggernaut, arm in arm with sensuality on one side and self-torture on the other, followed by a motley group of friars, pardoners, faquirs, gamesters, flagellants, mountebanks and harlots.

But neither can reason or religion exist or co-exist as reason and religion, except as far as they are actuated by the

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will . . . which is the sustaining, coercive, and ministerial power, the functions of which in the individual correspond to the officers of war and police in the ideal Republic of Plato. In its state of immanence or indwelling in reason and religion, the will appears indifferently as wisdom or as love: two names of the same power, the former more intelligential, the latter more spiritual . . . But in its utmost abstraction and consequent state of reprobation, the will becomes Satanic pride and rebellious self-idolatry in the relations of the spirit to itself, and remorseless despotism relatively to others: the more hopeless as the more obdurate by its subjugation of sensual impulses, by its superiority to toil and pain and pleasure; in short, by the fearful resolve to find in itself alone the one absolute motive of action, under which all other motives from within and without must be either subordinated or crushed.

This is the character which Milton has so philosophically as well as sublimely embodied in the Satan of his *Paradise Lost*. Alas! too often has it been embodied in real life. Too often has it given a dark and savage grandeur to the historic page . . . from Nimrod to Bonaparte. And from inattention to the possibility of such a character as well as from ignorance of its elements, even men of honest intentions too frequently become fascinated. Nay, whole nations have been so far duped by this want of insight and reflection as to regard with palliative admiration, instead of wonder and abhorrence, the Molochs of human nature who are indebted for the larger portion of their meteoric success to their total want of principle, and who surpass the generality of their fellow creatures in one act of courage only, that of daring to say with their whole heart, 'Evil, be thou my good!' . . .

I have only to add a few sentences in completion of this

MATURITY

comment, on the conscience and on the understanding. The conscience is neither reason, religion or will, but an experience *sui generis* of the coincidence of the human will with reason and religion. It might perhaps be called a spiritual sensation; but that there lurks a contradiction in the terms . . . In strictness, therefore, the conscience is neither a sensation nor a sense; but a *testifying state*, best described in the words of Scripture, as *the peace of God that passeth all* [iii] *understanding*. . . .

2 PHILOSOPHY

(a) THE IMPORTANCE OF PHILOSOPHY

It would not be difficult, by an unbroken chain of historic facts, to demonstrate that the most important changes in the commercial relations of the world had their origin in the closets or lonely walks of uninterested theorists; that the mighty epochs of commerce that have changed the face of empires; nay, the most important of those discoveries and improvements in the mechanic arts, which have numerically increased our population beyond what the wisest statesmen of Elizabeth's reign deemed possible, and again doubled this population virtually; that the most important, I say, of those inventions that in their results

. . . best uphold

War by her two main nerves, iron and gold . . .

had their origin not in the cabinets of statesmen or in the

practical insight of men of business, but in the visions of recluse genius. To the immense majority of men, even in civilized countries, speculative philosophy has ever been, and must ever remain, a *terra incognita*. Yet it is not the less true that all the epoch-forming revolutions of the Christian world, the revolutions of religion and with them the civil, social and domestic habits of the nations concerned, have coincided with the rise and fall of metaphysical systems. So few are the minds that really govern the machine of society. . . . [i]

The reading of *histories* . . . may dispose a man to satire; but the science of HISTORY, — history studied in the light of philosophy, as the great drama of an ever-unfolding Providence, — has a very different effect. It infuses hope and reverential thoughts of man and his destination . . . If [ii] there be any antidote to that restless craving for the wonders of the day, which, in conjunction with the appetite for publicity, is spreading like an efflorescence on the surface of our national character; if there exist any means for deriving resignation from general discontent . . . that antidote and these means must be sought for in the collation of the present with the past, in the habit of thoughtfully assimilating the events of our own age to those of the time before us . . . The [iii] true origin of human events is so little susceptible of that kind of evidence that can compel our belief; so many are the disturbing forces which in every cycle of changes modify the motion given by the first projection; and every age has, or imagines it has, its own circumstances which render past experience no longer applicable to the present case; that there will never be wanting answers, and explanations, and specious flatteries of hope to persuade a people and its government that the history of the past is inapplicable to

their case. And no wonder, if we read history for the facts
[iv] instead of reading it for the sake of the general principles. . . .

The remedial and prospective advantages that may be rationally anticipated from the habit of contemplating particulars in their universal laws; its tendency at once to fix and to liberalize the morality of private life, at once to produce and enlighten the spirit of public zeal . . . these advantages I have felt it my duty and made it my main object to press on your serious attention during the whole period of my literary labours from earliest manhood to the present hour. Whatever may have been the ^{خاص}specific theme of my ^{موضوع}communications, and whether they related to criticism, politics, or religion, — still principles, their subordination, their connection and their application in all the divisions of our tastes, duties, rules of conduct and schemes of belief, —
[v] have constituted my chapter of contents . . . An excess in our attachments to temporal and personal objects can be counteracted only by a pre-occupation of the intellect and the
[vi] affections with permanent, universal and eternal truths . . . These alone can interest the undegraded human spirit deeply and enduringly, because these alone belong to its
[vii] essence and will remain with it permanently . . . At the announcement of principles, of ideas, the soul of man awakes and starts up, as an exile in a far distant land at the unexpected
[viii] sounds of his native language

The sense of expediency, the cautious balancing of comparative advantages, the constant wakefulness to the *cui bono?* — in connection with the *quid mihi?* — all these are in their place in the routine of conduct by which the individual provides for himself the real or supposed wants of to-day and to-morrow; and in quiet times and prosperous circumstances a nation presents an aggregate of such individuals, a busy

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ant-hill in calm and sunshine. By the happy organization of a well-governed society, the contradictory interests of ten millions of such individuals may neutralize each other, and be reconciled in the unity of the national interest. But whence did this happy organization first come? Was it a tree transplanted from Paradise with all its branches in full fruitage? Or was it sowed in sunshine? . . . Let history answer these questions. With blood was it planted; it was rocked in tempests; the goat, the ass and the stag gnawed it; the wild boar has whetted his tusks on its bark. The deep scars are still extant on its trunk, and the path of the lightning may be traced among its higher branches . . . Mightier powers were at work than expediency ever yet called up, yea, mightier than the mere understanding can comprehend. . . . [ix]

There is a wisdom higher than prudence, to which prudence stands in the same relation as the mason and carpenter to the genial and scientific architect . . . The widest maxims [x] of prudence are like arms without hearts, disjointed from those feelings which flow forth from principles as from a fountain. So little are even the genuine maxims of expedience likely to be perceived or acted upon by those who have been habituated to admit nothing higher than expedience, that I dare hazard the assertion, that in the whole chapter of contents of European ruin; every article might be unanswerably deduced from the neglect of some maxim that had been repeatedly laid down, demonstrated and enforced with a host of illustrations, in some one or other of the works of Machiavelli, Bacon, or Harrington . . . If ever there were a [xi] time when the formation of just public principles becomes a duty of private morality: when the principles of morality in general ought to be made to bear on our public suffrages, and to affect every great national determination; when, in

short, his country should have a place by every Englishman's fire-side; and when the feelings and truths which give dignity to the fire-side and tranquillity to the death-bed, ought to be present and influensive in the cabinet and in the senate —

[xii] that time is now with us.

Berkeley indeed asserts, and is supported in his assertion by the great statesmen, Lord Bacon and Sir Walter Raleigh, that without an habitual interest in these subjects, a man [xiii] may be a dexterous intriguer, but never can be a statesman . . .

'And whatever the world may opine, he who hath not much meditated upon God, the human mind, and the *summum bonum*, may possibly make a thriving earth-worm, but will most indubitably make a blundering patriot and a sorry [xiv] statesman.' (Berkeley's *Siris*, §350). The higher a man's station, the more arduous and full of peril his duties, the more comprehensive should his foresight be, the more rooted his tranquillity concerning life and death. But these are gifts which no experience can bestow, but the experience from within: and there is a nobleness of the whole personal being, to which the contemplation of all events and phenomena in the light of the three master ideas, announced in the [xv] foregoing pages, can alone elevate the spirit . . . Where these are despised, or at best regarded as aliens from the actual business of life, and consigned to the ideal world of speculative philosophy and Utopian politics, instead of state-wisdom we shall have state-craft . . . We must content ourselves with expedient-makers, with fire-engines against fires, life-boats against inundations; but no houses built fire-[xvi] proof, no dams that rise above the water-mark.

I hold it the disgrace and calamity of a professed statesman not to know and acknowledge that a permanent, nationalized, learned order, a national clerisy or church,

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is an essential element of a rightly constituted nation, without which it wants the best security alike for its permanence and its progression; and for which neither tract-societies nor conventicles, nor Lancasterian schools, nor mechanics' institutions, nor lecture-bazaars under the absurd name of universities, nor all these collectively, can be a substitute. For they are all marked with the same asterisk of spuriousness, show the same distemper-spot on the front, that they are empirical specifics for morbid *symptoms* that help to feed and continue the disease.

But you wish for *general* illumination: you would spur-arm the toes of society: you would enlighten the higher ranks *per ascensum abimis*? You begin, therefore, with the attempt to *popularize* science: but you will only effect its *plebification* . . . From a popular philosophy and a philosophic [xvii] populace, Good sense deliver us . . . It is folly to think of [xviii] making all, or the many, philosophers, or even men of science and systematic knowledge. But it is duty and wisdom to aim at making as many as possible soberly and steadily religious; — inasmuch as the morality which the state requires in its citizens for its own well-being and ideal immortality, and without reference to their spiritual interest as individuals, can only exist for the people in the form of religion. But the existence of a true philosophy, or the power and habit of contemplating particulars in the unity and fontal mirror of the idea — this, in the rulers and teachers of a nation, is indispensable to a sound state of religion in all classes. In fine, Religion, true or false, is and ever has been the centre of gravity in a realm, to which all other things must and will accommodate themselves. [xix]

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(b) DECLINE OF PHILOSOPHY IN MODERN TIMES

Under this head I include the general neglect of all the maturer studies; the long and ominous eclipse of philosophy; the usurpation of that venerable name by physical and psychological empiricism; and the non-existence of a learned and philosophic public, which is perhaps the only innoxious form of an *imperium in imperio*, but at the same time the only form which is not directly or indirectly encouraged. . . .

The fact is simply this. We have — lovers, shall I entitle them? — or must I not rather hazard the introduction of their own phrases and say *amateurs* or *dilettanti*, as musicians, botanists, florists, mineralogists and antiquarians . . . Every work which can be made use of either to immediate profit or immediate pleasure, every work which falls in with the desire of acquiring wealth suddenly, or which can gratify the senses or pamper the still more degrading appetite for scandal and personal defamation, is sure of an appropriate circulation. But neither philosophy nor theology in the strictest sense of the words, can be said to have even a public existence among us. . . .

As to that which passes with us under the name of metaphysics, philosophic elements and the like, I refer every man of reflection to the contrast between the present times and those shortly after the restoration of ancient literature. In the latter we find the greatest men of the age, statesmen, warriors, monarchs, architects, in the closest intercourse with philosophy. I need only mention the names of Lorenzo the Magnificent, Picus Mirandola, Ficinus and Politian; the abstruse subjects of their discussion, and the importance attached to them as the requisite qualifications of men

placed by Providence as guides and governors of their fellow-creatures. If this be undeniable, equally notorious is it that at present the more effective a man's talents are, and the more likely he is to be useful and distinguished in the highest situations of public life, the earlier does he show his aversion to the metaphysics and the books of metaphysical speculation which are placed before him: though they come with the recommendation of being so many triumphs of modern good sense over the schools of ancient philosophy. Dante, Petrarch, Spenser, Philip and Algernon Sidney, Milton and Barrow were Platonists. But all the men of genius with whom it has been my fortune to converse, either profess to know nothing of the present systems or to despise them. It would be equally unjust and irrational to seek the solution of this difference in the men; and if not, it can be found only in the philosophic systems themselves. And so in truth it is. The living of former ages communed gladly with a life-breathing philosophy: the living of the present age wisely leave the dead to take care of the dead. [xx]

The very terms of ancient wisdom are worn out, or, far worse, stamped on baser metal . . . Sir Philip Sidney . . . [xxi] held high converse with Spenser on the idea of supersensual beauty; on all 'earthly fair and amiable' as the symbol of the idea; and on music and poesy as its living educts. With the same genial reverence did the young Algernon commune with Harrington and Milton on the idea of a perfect state; and in what sense it is true that the men (that is, the aggregate of the inhabitants of a country at any one time) are made for the State, not the State for the men. But these lights shine no longer, or for a few. Exeunt: and enter in their stead Holofernes and Costard, masked as Metaphysics and Commonsense. And these, too, have their ideas. The

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former has an idea that Hume, Hartley and Condillac have
[xxii] exploded all ideas but those of sensation; . . . that there is no
absurdity in asking what colour virtue is, inasmuch as the
proper philosophic answer would be black, blue or bottle-
green, according as the coat, waistcoat and small-clothes
[xxxiii] had excited the sensations which formed our idea of virtue.
. . . And his friend, DEPUTY COSTARD, has no *idea* of a
better flavoured haunch of venison than he dined off at the
[xxiv] London Tavern last week. . . .

The teeth of the old serpent sowed by the Cadmuses of
French literature under Louis XV produced a plenteous
crop of such philosophers and truth-trumpeters in the reign
of his ill-fated successor. They taught many facts, historical,
political, psychological and ecclesiastical, diffusing their
notions so widely that the very ladies and hair-dressers of
[xxv] Paris became fluent encyclopedists . . . Prurient, bustling
and revolutionary, this French wisdom has never more than
grazed the surfaces of knowledge. As political economy,
in its zeal for the increase of food it habitually overlooked
the qualities and even the sensations of those that were to
feed on it. As ethical philosophy, it recognized no duties
which it could not reduce into debtor and creditor accounts
on the ledgers of self-love, where no coin was sterling which
could not be rendered into agreeable sensations. And even
in its height of self-complacency as chemical art, greatly am
I deceived if it has not from the very beginning mistaken the
products of destruction, *cadavera rerum*, for the elements of
composition: and most assuredly it has dearly purchased a
few brilliant inventions at the loss of all communion with
[xxvi] life and the spirit of nature.

Consequences exemplified. State of nature, or the Ourang

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Outang theology of the origin of the human race, substituted for the Book of Genesis, Ch. I-X. Rights of nature for the duties and privileges of citizens. Idea-less facts, misnamed proofs from history, grounds of experience, etc., substituted for principles and the insight derived from them. State-policy a Cyclops with one eye, and that in the back of the head! Our measures of policy either a series of anachronisms or a truckling to events, substituted for the science that should command them; for all true insight is foresight . . . Meantime, the true historical feeling, the immortal life of an historical Nation, generation linked to generation by faith, freedom, heraldry, and ancestral fame, languishing and giving place to the superstitions of wealth and newspaper reputation.

Talents without genius: a swarm of clever, well-informed men: an anarchy of minds, a despotism of maxims. Despotism of finance in government and legislation — of vanity and sciolism in the intercourse of life — of presumption, temerity, and hardness of heart in political economy.

The guess-work of general consequences substituted for moral and political philosophy, adopted as a text-book in one of the universities and cited as authority in the legislature: *Plebs pro Senatu Populoque*; the wealth of the nation (i.e. of the wealthy individuals thereof, and the magnitude of the Revenue) for the well-being of the people.

Gin consumed by paupers to the value of about eighteen millions yearly. Government by journeymen clubs; by reviews, magazines, and above all by newspapers. Lastly, crimes quadrupled for the whole country, and in some counties decupled.

[xxvii]

Thank Heaven! — notwithstanding the attempts of Thomas Payne and his compeers, it is not so bad with us.

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Open infidelity has ceased to be a means even of gratifying vanity . . . Nay it became a mark of original thinking to defend the Creed and the Ten Commandments: so the strong minds veered round and religion came again into fashion. But still I exceedingly doubt whether the superannuation of sundry superstitious fancies be the result of any real diffusion of sound thinking in the nation at large. . . . As many errors are despised by men from ignorance as [xxviii] from knowledge. . . .

For myself, I would much rather see the English people at large believe somewhat too much than merely just enough, if the latter is to be produced, or must be accompanied by, a contempt or neglect of the faith and intellect of their forefathers. For . . . it remains most worthy of our consideration, whether a fancied superiority to their ancestors' intellects must not be speedily followed in the popular mind by disrespect for their ancestors' institutions. Assuredly, it is not easy to place any confidence in a form of Church or State, of the founders of which we have been taught to believe that their philosophy was jargon, and their feelings and notions [xxix] rank superstition. . . .

Now it is not denied that the framers of our Church Liturgy, Homilies, and Articles, entertained metaphysical opinions irreconcilable in their first principles with the system of speculative philosophy which has been taught in this country . . . [Is] it likely that the faith of our ancestors will be retained when their philosophy is rejected — rejected *a priori*, as baseless notions not worth inquiring into, as [xxx] obsolete errors which it would be slaying the slain to confute?

We have attached a portion even of our national glory . . . to the name of the assumed father of the system (that system of disguised and decorous Epicureanism which has

been the only orthodox philosophy of the last hundred years) who raised it to its present pride of place and almost universal acceptance throughout Europe. And how was this effected? Extrinsically, by all the causes, consequences, and accompaniments of the Revolution of 1688 . . . Intrinsically, and as far as the philosophic scheme itself alone is concerned, it was effected by the mixed policy and *bonhomie* with which the author contrived to retain in his celebrated work whatever the system possesses of soothing for the indolence, and of flattering for the vanity, of men's average understandings: while he kept out of sight all its darker features which outrage the instinctive faith and moral feelings of mankind . . . Great at all times, and almost [xxxix] incalculable, are the influences of party spirit in exaggerating contemporary reputation; but never perhaps from the first syllable of recorded time were they exerted under such a concurrence and conjunction of fortunate accidents, of helping and furthering events and circumstances, as in the instance of Mr. Locke.

I am most fully persuaded that the principles both of taste, morals and religion, taught in our most popular *compendia* of moral and political philosophy, natural theology evidences of Christianity, and the like, are false, injurious and debasing. But I am likewise not less deeply convinced that all the well-meant attacks on the writings of modern infidels and heretics, in support either of the miracles or of the mysteries of the Christian religion can be of no permanent utility while the authors themselves join in the vulgar appeal to common-sense as the one infallible judge . . . Many of the [xxxi] most specious arguments in proof of the imperfection and injustice of the present constitution of our legislature will be found, on closer examination, to pre-suppose the truth of

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certain principles, from which the adducers of these arguments loudly profess their dissent. In political changes no permanence can be hoped for in the edifice without consistency in the foundations. . . .

[xxxiii] The Articles of our Church and the true principles of government and social order will never be effectually and consistently maintained against their antagonists till the champions have themselves ceased to worship the same Baal with their enemies While all parties agree in their abjuration of Plato and Aristotle, and in their contemptuous neglect of the Schoolmen and the scholastic logic . . . while all alike pre-assume with Mr. Locke that the mind contains only the reliques of the senses, and therefore proceed with him to explain the substance from the shadow, the voice from the echo, — they can but detect each other's inconsistencies Lastly, the godless materialist, as the only consistent because the only consequent reasoner, will secretly laugh at [xxxiv] both.

(C) MECHANIC AND VITAL PHILOSOPHY CONTRASTED

My system, if I may venture to give it so fine a name, is the only attempt, I know, ever made to reduce all knowledges into harmony. It opposes no other system, but shows what was true in each; and how that which was true in the particular, in each of them became error, *because* it was only half the truth. I have endeavoured to unite the insulated fragments of truth, and therewith to frame a perfect mirror I wish, in short, to connect by a moral *copula* natural history with political history; or, in other words, to make history

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scientific and science historical — to take from history its
accidentality and from science its fatalism.

[xxxv]

The pith of my system is to make the senses out of the
mind — not the mind out of the senses, as Locke did . . .

[xxxvi]

The result of my system will be to show that, so far from
the world being a goddess in petticoats, it is the Devil in a
strait waistcoat.

[xxxvii]

[*Wordsworth's purpose in 'The Prelude' was*] to infer and
reveal the proof of, and necessity for, the whole state of man
and society being subject to, and illustrative of, a redemptive
process in operation, showing how this idea reconciled all
the anomalies, and promised future glory and restoration.
Something of this sort was, I think, agreed on. It is, in
substance, what I have been all my life doing in my system
of philosophy.

[xxxviii]

The difference between an inorganic and an organic body
lies in this: In the first — a sheaf of corn — the whole is
nothing more than a collection of the individual parts or
phenomena. In the second — a man — the whole is the
effect of, or result from, the parts; it — the whole — is every-
thing, and the parts are nothing. . . .

[xxxix]

The leading differences between mechanic and vital
philosophy may all be drawn from one point; namely, that
the former, demanding for every mode and act of existence
real or possible visibility, knows only of distance and near-
ness, composition (or rather juxtaposition) and decomposi-
tion, in short, the relations of unproductive particles to each
other; so that in every instance the result is the exact sum of
the component quantities, as in arithmetical addition. This
is the philosophy of death, and only of a dead nature can it
hold good. In life, much more in spirit, and in a living and
spiritual philosophy, the two component counter-powers

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actually interpenetrate each other and generate a higher third, including both the former, *ita tamen ut sit alia et* [xi] *major*. . . .

(d) THE REASON AND THE UNDERSTANDING

Until you have mastered the fundamental difference, in kind, between the reason and the understanding as faculties of the human mind, you cannot escape a thousand difficulties in philosophy. It is pre-eminently the *Gradus ad Philoso-* [xli] *phiam*.

The English public is not yet ripe to comprehend the essential difference between the reason and the understanding — between a principle and a maxim — an eternal truth and a mere conclusion generalized from a great number of facts. A man, having seen a million moss roses all red, concludes from his own experience that all moss roses are red. That is a maxim with him — the *greatest* amount of his knowledge upon the subject. But it is only true until some gardener has produced a white moss rose — after which the maxim is good for nothing . . . Now compare this in its highest degree with the assurance which you have that the two sides of any triangle are together greater than the third. This, demonstrated of one triangle, is seen to be eternally true of all imaginable triangles. This is a truth perceived at once by the intuitive reason, independently of experience. It is and must ever be so, multiply and vary [xlii] the shapes and sizes of the triangles as you may.

I affirm that reason is the knowledge of the laws of the whole considered as one: and, as such, it is contra-distinguished from the understanding, which concerns itself

exclusively with the quantities, qualities and relations of particulars in time and space. The understanding, therefore, is the science of *phenomena*, and of their subsumption under distinct kinds and sorts (*genera* and *species*). Its functions supply the rules and constitute the possibility of experience; but remain mere logical forms, except as far as materials are given by the senses or sensations. . . . [xlili]

Aristotle was, and still is, the sovereign lord of the understanding; the faculty of judging by the senses. He was a conceptualist, and never could raise himself into that higher state, which was natural to Plato, and has been so to others, in which the understanding is distinctly contemplated, and, as it were, looked down upon from the throne of actual ideas, or living, inborn, essential truths . . . Every man is born an Aristotelian or a Platonist. . . . [xliv]

Pantagruel is the Reason; Panurge the Understanding, — the pollarded man, the man with every faculty except the reason. I scarcely know an example more illustrative of the distinction between the two. [xlv]

All that is good is in the reason, not in the understanding which is proved by the malignity of those who lose their reason. When a man is said to be out of his wits, we do not mean that he has lost his reason but only his understanding, or his power of choosing his means or perceiving their fitness to the end . . . Well and truly has the understanding been [xlvi] defined; *Facultas mediata et mediorum*: — the faculty of means to medial ends, that is to Purposes or such ends as are themselves but means to some ulterior end . . . Don Quixote [xlvii] is not a man out of his senses, but a man in whom the imagination and the pure reason are so powerful as to make him disregard the evidence of sense when it opposed their conclusions. Sancho is the common-sense of the social man-

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animal, unenlightened and unsanctified by the reason. You see how he reverences his master at the very time he is [xlviii] cheating him.

The eye is not more inappropriate to sound than the mere understanding to the modes and laws of spiritual existence . . . I assert that the understanding or experiential faculty, unirradiated by the reason and the spirit, has no appropriate object but the material world in relation to our worldly interests . . . It must not, however, be overlooked, that this insulation of the understanding is our own act and deed. The man of healthful and undivided intellect uses his understanding in this state of abstraction only as a tool or organ; even as the arithmetician uses numbers, that is, as [xlix] the means, not the end, of knowledge. . . .

Man of understanding, canst thou command the stone to lie, canst thou bid the flower to bloom, where thou hast placed it in thy classification? . . . If to mint and remember names delight thee, still arrange and classify and pore and pull to pieces, and peep into death to look for life, as monkeys put their hands behind a looking-glass! Yet, consider in the first sabbath which thou imposest on the busy discursion of thought, that all this is, at best, little more than [l] a technical memory. . . .

[*The Understanding*] was placed as a ward of honour in the courts of faith and reason; but it chose to live alone and became a harlot by the wayside. The commercial spirit, and the ascendancy of the experimental philosophy which took place at the close of the seventeenth century, though both good and beneficial in their own kinds, combined to foster its corruption. Flattered and dazzled by the real or supposed discoveries which it had made, the more the understanding was enriched, the more did it become debased; till science

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itself put on a selfish and sensual character, and immediate utility . . . was imposed as the test of all intellectual powers and pursuits. Worth was degraded into a lazy synonym of value; and value was exclusively attached to the interest of the senses. But though the growing alienation and self-sufficiency of the understanding was perceptible at an earlier period, yet it seems to have been about the middle of the last century, under the influence of Voltaire, D'Alembert, Diderot, say generally of the so-called Encyclopedists, and alàs! — of their crowned proselytes and disciples, Frederick, Joseph and Catherine, — that the human understanding, and this too in the narrowest form, was tempted to throw off all show of reverence to the spiritual and even to the moral powers and impulses of the soul; and usurping the name of reason, openly joined the banners of Anti-Christ, at once the pander and the prostitute of sensuality, and whether in the cabinet, laboratory, the dissecting-room or the brothel, alike busy in the schemes of vice and irreligion. [Li]

3 POLITICS

(a) CRITICISM OF POLITICAL THOUGHT RESULTING FROM MECHANIC PHILOSOPHY

(i) *Hobbes*

Hobbes . . . living in an age of tumult, amid the fumes and fermentations of that process which ended in bringing the elements of our Constitution to their present happy equipoise, and being himself of a timorous nature and recluse,

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manifest. For hence it follows, as an inevitable consequence, that all which is said in the *contrat social* of that sovereign will, to which the right of universal legislation appertains, applies to no one human being, to no society or assemblage of human beings, and least of all to the mixed multitude that makes up the people; but entirely and exclusively to reason itself, which, it is true, dwells in every man potentially, but actually and in perfect purity is found in no man and in no body of men. . . .

Luther lived long enough to see the consequences of the doctrines into which indignant pity and abstract ideas of right had hurried him — to see, to retract, and to oppose them. If the same had been the lot of Rousseau, I doubt not that his conduct would have been the same. In his whole system there is beyond controversy much that is true and well reasoned, if only its application be not extended further than the nature of the case permits. But then we shall find that little or nothing is won by it for the institutions of society; and least of all for the constitution of governments, the theory of which it was his wish to ground on it. Apply his principles to any case in which the sacred and inviolable laws of morality are immediately interested, all becomes just and pertinent. No power on earth can oblige me to act against my conscience. No magistrate, no monarch, no legislature, can without tyranny compel me to do anything which the acknowledged laws of God have forbidden me to do. So act that thou mayest be able, without involving any contradiction, to will that the maxim of thy conduct should be the law of all intelligent beings — is the one universal and sufficient principle and guide of morality. And why? Because the object of morality is not the outward act, but the internal maxim of our actions. And so far it is

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individual in the state of nature, and the social state must have only recognized, not introduced or constituted, the rights and duties of its component members. [iv]

(ii) *Rousseau*

On the grounds of government as laid exclusively in the pure reason . . . viz., the theory of Rousseau and the French Economists.

The system commences with an undeniable truth, and an important deduction therefrom equally undeniable. All voluntary actions, say they, having for their objects good or evil, are moral actions. But all morality is grounded in the reason. Every man is born with the faculty of reason . . . Again: as the faculty of reason implies free agency, morality (i.e. the dictate of reason) gives to every rational being the right of acting as a free agent and of finally determining his conduct by his own will, according to his own conscience; and this right is inalienable . . . In respect of their reason all men are equal. The measure of the understanding, and of all other faculties of man, is different in different persons; but reason is not susceptible of degree. . . .

Thrice blessed faculty of reason! . . . To thee, who being one art the same in all, we owe the privilege, that of all we can become one, a living whole, that we have a country! Who, then, shall dare prescribe a law of moral action for any rational being, which does not flow immediately from that reason which is the fountain of all morality? . . .

By the application of these principles to the social state there arises the following system, which, as far as respects its first grounds, is developed the most fully by J. J. Rousseau in his work *Du Contrat Social*. If, then, no individual possesses the right of prescribing anything to another

respect of the inward religion in the individual's own heart, the only religion according to him which a wise man has anything to do with. The outward forms of religion, the choice of sacred books, public creeds, church discipline, and ecclesiastical revenues and rights, he subjects wholly and utterly to the supreme Magistrate, nay, and ventures to denounce every innovation in the forms and tenets of the Church unauthorized by the monarch, not only as high treason, meriting death here, but as blasphemy to be punished hereafter.

The reader will agree with me that the kettle is not the better for the tinkering. At the present day the bare statement of the system suffices for its confutation. The merest initiate in reasoning will reply that, by the necessity of human nature, to suppress all outward, audible, and visible manifestations of our inward convictions and feelings, is, certainly, though gradually, to destroy these feelings and convictions themselves, that the same law therefore which obliges me to retain, must likewise oblige me to express and communicate my faith. And how can that be my duty towards myself which is not at the same time my duty towards my children? It will be detected, too, that the system contains its own confutation: for by what obligation can a people, united by common grievances, be withheld from reclaiming from the monarch the power which had been delegated, but which never was or could be actually transferred, any more than it is possible for ten men six foot high to make one among them sixty foot? By virtue of the contract? Then there must exist a moral obligation to observe a contract, prior to, and independent of, the fear of the monarch. By the fear of the Almighty? But this fear was present, as an equal source of obligation, to all men and to each

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individual, the rule of which is not contained in their common reason, society, which is but an aggregate of individuals, can communicate this right to no one. It cannot possibly make that rightful which the higher and inviolable law of human nature declares contradictory and unjust. But concerning right and wrong, the reason of each and every man is the competent judge; for how else could he be an amenable being, or the proper subject of any law? This reason, therefore, in any one man, cannot even in the social state be rightfully subjugated to the reason of any other. Neither an individual, nor yet the whole multitude which constitutes the state, can possess the right of compelling him to do anything of which it cannot be demonstrated that his own reason must join in prescribing it. If therefore society is to be under a rightful constitution of government, and one that can impose on rational beings a true and moral obligation to obey it, it must be framed on such principles that every individual follows his own reason while he obeys the laws of the constitution, and performs the will of the state while he follows the dictates of his own reason.

This is expressly asserted by Rousseau, who states the problem of a perfect constitution of government in the following words: '*Trouver une forme d'Association, par laquelle chacun s'unissant à tous, n'obéisse pourtant qu'à lui-même, et reste aussi libre qu'auparavant.*' . . . The right of the individual to retain his whole natural independence, even in the social state, is absolutely inalienable. . . .

Laws obligatory on the conscience can only therefore proceed from that reason which remains always one and the same, whether it speaks through this or that person . . . The individuals, indeed, are subject to errors and passions, and each man has his own defects. But when men are assembled

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manifest. For hence it follows, as an inevitable consequence, that all which is said in the *contrat social* of that sovereign will, to which the right of universal legislation appertains, applies to no one human being, to no society or assemblage of human beings, and least of all to the mixed multitude that makes up the people; but entirely and exclusively to reason itself, which, it is true, dwells in every man potentially, but actually and in perfect purity is found in no man and in no body of men. . . .

Luther lived long enough to see the consequences of the doctrines into which indignant pity and abstract ideas of right had hurried him — to see, to retract, and to oppose them. If the same had been the lot of Rousseau, I doubt not that his conduct would have been the same. In his whole system there is beyond controversy much that is true and well reasoned, if only its application be not extended further than the nature of the case permits. But then we shall find that little or nothing is won by it for the institutions of society; and least of all for the constitution of governments, the theory of which it was his wish to ground on it. Apply his principles to any case in which the sacred and inviolable laws of morality are immediately interested, all becomes just and pertinent. No power on earth can oblige me to act against my conscience. No magistrate, no monarch, no legislature, can without tyranny compel me to do anything which the acknowledged laws of God have forbidden me to do. So act that thou mayest be able, without involving any contradiction, to will that the maxim of thy conduct should be the law of all intelligent beings — is the one universal and sufficient principle and guide of morality. And why? Because the object of morality is not the outward act, but the internal maxim of our actions. And so far it is

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infallible. But with what show of reason can we pretend, from a principle by which we are to determine the purity of our motives, to deduce the form and matter of a rightful government, the main office of which is to regulate the outward actions of particular bodies of men, according to their particular circumstances? Can we hope better of constitutions framed by ourselves than of that which was given by Almighty Wisdom itself?

[*The*] principle on which the whole system rests is, that reason is not susceptible of degree. Nothing, therefore, which subsists wholly in degrees, the changes of which do not obey any necessary law, can be subjects of pure science or determinable by mere reason. For these things we must rely on our understandings, enlightened by past experience and immediate observation, and determining our choice by comparisons of expediency . . . From reason alone can we derive the principles which our understandings are to apply, the ideal to which by means of our understandings we should endeavour to approximate. This, however, gives no proof that reason alone ought to govern and direct human beings, either as individuals or as states. It ought not to do this, because it cannot. The laws of reason are unable to satisfy the first conditions of human society. . . .

The chief object for which men first formed themselves into a state was not the protection of their lives but of their property. Where the nature of the soil and climate precludes all property but personal, and permits that only in its simplest forms, as in Greenland, men remain in the domestic state and form neighbourhoods but not governments. And in North America the chiefs appear to exercise government in those tribes only which possess individual landed property

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... To property, therefore, and to its inequalities, all human laws directly or indirectly relate, which would not be equally laws in the state of nature. Now it is impossible to deduce the right of property from pure reason (I mean, practically, and with the inequalities inseparable from the actual existence of property. Abstractedly, the right to property is deducible from the free-agency of man. If to act freely be a right, a sphere of action must be so, too) ... In the same manner, the moral laws of the intellectual world, as far as they are deducible from pure intellect, are never perfectly applicable to our mixed and sensitive nature, because man is something besides reason; because his reason never acts by itself but must clothe itself in the substance of individual understanding and specific inclination, in order to become a reality and an object of con-
[v] sciousness and experience.

(iii) *Jacobinism: or rights before duties*

The priests and prophets of Jacobinism ... find no object co-extensive with *their* wisdom, but PERSONS and the inherencies of *personal* dues. The weal and woe of the universal individuality of the moral world form the *direct* end, the *primary* object, of *their* constitution codes, the very axioms of their legislative geometry ... Counting where they should weigh, and with true vulgar envy affecting to despise as null or even suspicious, the wealth and rank which are our best attainable securities for (an average at least of) integrity and knowledge, THEY would reform and perfect society on principles preclusive of all society but that of
[vi] fiends and angels. ...

There are two possible modes of unity in a state: one by absolute co-ordination of each to all, and of all to each;

the other by subordination of classes and office. Now I maintain that there never was an instance of the first, nor can there be, without slavery as its condition and accompaniment, as in Athens. The poor Swiss cantons are no exception. The mistake lies in confounding a state which must be based on classes and unequal property, with a church, which is founded on the person and has no qualification but personal merit. . . . [vii]

Citizens of the world, and teachers of *physiocratic* science, the demagogues of this 'enlightened age' . . . *commenced* by worshipping the sanctity of abstraction MAN, in the divinity of that other abstraction, the PEOPLE. But alas! the scheme *concludes* by mortising and compacting the scattered and sooty fragments of the *Populace* into one living and 'multitudinous idol', a blind but hundred-armed giant, of fearful power, to undermine the foundations of the social edifice, and finally perchance to pull down the all-sheltering roof on its own head, the victim of its own madness! Thus, in order to sacrifice the *natural* STATE to PERSONS, they must concorporate PERSONS into one *unnatural* state; the deluded subjects of which soon find themselves under a dominion ten-fold more oppressive and vexatious than that to which the laws of GOD and NATURE had attached them, and whose punitive vengeance they first alarm by sedition, then provoke by riot, and brave at last as open rebels. Shut up in a labyrinthine prison of forms and by-laws, of engagements by oath and contributions by compulsion, they move in slavish files beneath a jealous and ever-neighbouring control, which despotizes in detail; in which every man is made his brother's keeper; and which, arming the hand and fixing the eye of all against each, merges the free-will of the individual in the merciless tyranny of the confederation. [viii]

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Many and strangely various are the shapes which the spirit of Jacobinism can assume. Now it is philosophy, contending for indifference to all positive institutions under the pretexts of liberality and toleration . . . Now it appears as refined sensibility and philanthropy, declaiming piteously concerning the wrongs and wretchedness of the oppressed many, and in play and novel amending the faulty and partial schemes of Providence by assigning every vice and folly to the rich and noble and all the virtues . . . to the poor and ignorant . . . These are its shapes and dresses when the spirit of Jacobinism travels incognito, and in which it prepares and announces its approaching public entry! . . . Let it not be objected . . . that from mere caprice I have applied the opprobrious name of Jacobinism to various and discordant forms of folly and might. They are all one, or at least of one family, all united or at least confraternized by the same marked and distinct characters. In all alike the cry is evermore of Rights, never of Duties; in all alike the scheme consists of abstract reason, which, belonging only to beings equable and unchanging, are above man; while the materials implements and agency of its realization are found in terror, secrecy, falsehood, cupidity, and all the [ix] passions and practices which are, or ought to be, *below* man.

(iv) *Major Cartwright and Universal Suffrage*

Major Cartwright, in his deduction of the rights of the subject from principles 'not susceptible of proof, being self-evident . . .' affirms ' . . . that a power which ought never to be used ought never to exist'. Again, he affirms that 'Laws to bind all must be assented to by all, and consequently every man, even the poorest, has an equal right to suffrage': and this for an additional reason, because 'all without exception

are capable of feeling happiness or misery, accordingly as they are well or ill governed'. But are they not, then, capable of feeling happiness or misery accordingly as they do or do not possess the means of a comfortable subsistence? and who is the judge, what is a comfortable subsistence, but the man himself? Might not, then, on the same or equivalent principles, a leveller construct a right to equal property? The inhabitants of this country without property form, doubtless, a great majority; each of these has a right to a suffrage, and the richest man to no more: and the object of this suffrage is that each individual may secure himself a true efficient representative of his will. Here then is a legal power of abolishing or equalizing property; and according to the Major himself, a power which ought never to be used ought not to exist.

Therefore, unless he carries his system to the whole length of common labour and common possession, a right to universal suffrage cannot exist: but if not to universal suffrage, there can exist no natural right to suffrage at all. In whatever way he would obviate this objection, he must admit expedience founded on experience and particular circumstances, which will vary in every different nation at different times, as the maxim of all legislation and the ground of all legislative power. For his universal principles, as far as they are principles and universal, necessarily suppose uniform and perfect subjects, which are to be found in the ideas of pure geometry and (I trust) in the realities of Heaven, but never, never, in creatures of flesh and blood. [x]

(v) *Utilitarian Ethics*

[Coleridge's references to this subject being scattered, fragmentary, and perhaps not entirely free from inconsistency, it has

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seemed best to put together the relevant excerpts without any attempt to connect them, but with the addition — where possible — of dates.]

I doubt not that, supposing mankind enlightened as to their true good, the best for the whole world would be the best for the individual. Both roads lead to the same goal, but the latter road is more neighboured by false roads, is a right road through a labyrinth. [*Undated note on Works of*
[xi] *Algernon Sidney.*]

It is a matter of infinite difficulty, but fortunately of comparative indifference, to determine what a man's motive may have been for this or that particular action. Rather seek to learn what his objects in general are. What does he in general wish, habitually pursue? and thence deduce his impulses, which are commonly the true efficient causes of men's conduct; and without which the motive
[xii] itself would not have become a motive. [1812]

'Oh! that God,' says Carey in his journal in Hindostan, 'would make the Gospel successful among them! That would undoubtedly make them honest men . . . ' Now this is a fact — spite of infidels and philosophizing Christians, a fact. A perfect explanation of it would require and would show the psychology of faith — the distance between the whole soul's modifying an action, and an act enforced by modifications of the soul amid prudential motives or favour-
[xiii] ing impulses. [1809-1816]

[*The*] reflection that [*a certain*] course of action will purchase heaven for me, for my soul, involves a thought of and for all men who pursue the same course . . . That selfishness which includes, of necessity, the selves of all my

fellow-creatures, is assuredly a social and generous principle . . . Blessed be God! that which makes us capable of vicious self-interestedness capacitates us also for disinterestedness. [xiv]
[1809-1816]

[Of] all the most numerous are the men who have evermore their own dearest beloved self as the only or main goal or butt of their endeavours straight and steady before their eyes, and whose whole inner world turns on the great axis of self-interest. These form the majority, if not of mankind, yet of those by whom the business of life is carried on; and most expedient it is that so it should be; nor can we imagine anything better contrived for the advantage of society. For these are the most industrious, orderly and circumspect portion of society, and the actions governed by this principle, with the results, are the only materials on which either the statesman or individuals can safely calculate. . . .

There is in the heart of all men a working principle — call it ambition, or vanity, or desire of distinction, the inseparable adjunct of our individuality and personal nature, and flowing from the same source as language — the instinct and necessity in each man of declaring his particular existence, and thus of singling or singularizing himself . . . Though selfish in its origin, it yet tends to elevate the individual from selfishness into self-love, under a softer and perhaps better form than that of self-interest, the form of self-respect. Whatever other objects the man may be pursuing, and with whatever other inclinations, he is still by this principle compelled to pass out of himself in imagination, and to survey himself at a sufficient distance, in order to judge what figure he is likely to make in the eyes of his fellow-men. But in thus taking his station as at

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the apex of a triangle, while the self is at one angle of the base, he makes it possible at least that the image of his neighbour may appear at the other, whether by spontaneous association, or placed there for the purposes of comparison; and so both be contemplated at equal distance. But this is the first step towards disinterestedness; and though it should never be reached, the advantage of the appearance is soon learnt, and the necessity of avoiding the appearance of the contrary. But appearances cannot be long sustained without some touch of the reality. At all events there results a control over our actions; some good may be produced, and many a poisonous or offensive fruit will be prevented. Courtesy, urbanity, gallantry, munificence; the outward influence of the law shall I call it? or rather fashion of honour? — these are the handsome hypocrisies that spring from the desire of distinction.

A pagan might be as orthodox as Paul on the doctrine of works. First — set aside the large portion of them that have their source in the constitutional temperament — the merit of which, if any, belongs to nature, not to the individual agent; and of the remaining number of good works, nine are derived from vices for one that has its origin in virtue. I have often, in looking at the waterworks and complex machinery of our manufactories, indulged a humorous mood by fancying that the hammers, cogs, fly-wheels, etc. were each actuated by some appetite or passion — hate, rage, revenge, vanity, cupidity, etc. — while the general result was most benignant, and the machine, taken as a whole, the product of power, knowledge and benevolence! Such a machine does the moral world, the [xv] world of human nature, appear. . . . [1809-1816]

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It is difficult to conceive a more unhappy and perplexed creature than man would be if he possessed no other guide for his actions than his own previous calculation of their consequences. Unhappy he must needs be from the limited sphere and uncertainty of his foresight even when it exists in its utmost perfection, and still more so through the obliquities caused in it by his passions. The intervention of accidents 'between the cup and the lip' is the subject of a hundred proverbs in all languages, and our incapacity for praying wisely for any particular object of our desire among the primary articles of all rational religions. Nor would his unhappiness be greater than his perplexity, and the inevitable result of both would be the abandonment of the faculty itself, or the exertion of it for the exclusive purposes of an immediate and brutal selfishness.

For in such calculation of consequences, how far are we to proceed? Is it to include our children and our particular friends? Is it to be confined to these? or is it to embrace the interests of our country and mankind? If the latter, the result of our calculations must depend altogether on the nature of our convictions concerning the final causes of the world. For if our actions derive their sole value from the sum-total of their consequences to the *optimist*, all actions must be equally good; while to him who thinks the world controlled by a malignant destiny, or by chance, all actions would be evil in the one case, and in the other indifferent, that is, as likely to be good as bad; and vice versa; or, would we confine the calculations to our own persons and times, the same difficulties will present themselves — whether, for instance, we are to calculate for the whole number of years which it is *possible* we may live, or for some shorter period: till, the circle of selfishness narrow-

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ing at every round, our forethought would at length fall into the present hour as to its natural centre; and we should sink into the position of brutes. . . .

What other result, indeed, could we expect when a creature, valuing its own understanding beyond the wisdom of its creator, deranges and inverts the natural order of its faculties, and substitutes for the dictates of its own conscience the conjectures of that *prudence* which deserves its name then only when it is employed as the agent and organ of a nobler faculty? It may be objected that prudence itself, enlightened by experience and proceeding on the injurious *general* consequences of regulating our conduct, universally and exclusively, by a previous calculation of *particular* consequences, does itself command an *implicit* faith in the clear and positive determinations of the conscience; nay, justifies even an occasional surrender of the soul to that high enthusiasm which acknowledges no other necessity than that of acting justly and generously, be the consequences what they may. For these persons cannot blind themselves to the fact that without this enthusiasm nothing pre-eminently great or advantageous has been obtained for mankind, either as the members of a particular state, or as citizens of the world. But surely . . . these reasoners are not aware of the contradiction involved in making *that* the principle and *primate* of all morality, the first dictate of which is that itself should sometimes be suspended, and always obeyed in subordination to some other principle. It is no doubt most true, that the actions of an adequately enlightened self-love will in general (perhaps always) coincide with the precepts of the moral law. Where then lies the difference? In that . . . (which) is worth all the rest told ten times over, in the worth and essential character of the *agents*!

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Need I add the inherent unfitness, as well as the direful consequences, of making virtue, by the possession of which the weal and woe of all men are ultimately determined . . . depend on *talent*, a gift so unequally dispensed by nature, the degrees in which it is given being indeed different in every person, and the development and cultivation of which are effected by all the inequalities of fortune? This is one proof . . . among many, that there is a natural affinity between despotism and modern philosophy, notwithstanding the proud pretensions of the latter as the emancipator of the human race, that their present connection therefore is not a mere accident, and that the genuine spirit of liberty and equality is exclusively derivable from the acknowledgment of the existence and absolute supremacy of a law in the mind 'Whose service is perfect freedom'; of a law common to all men, and to all men equally evident, those only excepted who have themselves wilfully obscured it through pride or depraved inclinations. *The aristocracy of talent* is, therefore, no unmeaning phrase in itself, execrable as was its purport in the minds of its first framers: it exists . . . wherever the understanding, or calculating faculty, which is properly the executive branch of self-government, has usurped that supreme legislative power which belongs *jure divino* to our *moral* being. [1809]

[xvi]

O.P.Q. in the *Morning Post* is a clever fellow. He is for the greatest possible happiness for the greatest possible number, and for the longest possible time. So am I; so are you, and every one of us, I will venture to say, round the tea-table. First, however, what does O.P.Q. mean by the word *happiness*? and secondly, how does he propose to make other persons agree in *his* definition of the term? Don't you

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see the ridiculous absurdity of setting up *that* as a principle or motive of action, which is, in fact, a necessary and essential instinct of our very nature — an inborn and indistinguishable desire? How can creatures susceptible of pleasure and pain do otherwise than desire happiness? But, *what* happiness? That is the question. The American savage, in scalping his fallen enemy, pursues *his* happiness naturally and adequately. A Chickasaw, or Pawnee Bentham, or O.P.Q., would necessarily hope for the most frequent opportunities possible of scalping the greatest possible number of savages for the longest possible time. There is no escaping this absurdity, unless you come back to a standard of reason and duty, imperative upon our merely pleasurable sensations. Oh! but, says O.P.Q., I am for the happiness of *others*! Of others! Are you, indeed? Well, I happen to be one of those *others*, so far as I can judge from what you show me of your habits and views, I would rather be excused from your banquet of happiness. *Your* mode of happiness would make *me* miserable. To go about doing as much *good* as possible to as many men as possible, is, indeed, an excellent object for a man to propose to himself; but then, in order that you may not sacrifice the real good and happiness of others to your particular views, which may be quite different from your neighbour's, you must do *that* good to others which the reason, common to all, pronounces to be good for all. In this sense your fine [xvii] maxim is so very true as to be a mere truism. [1831]

So you object, with old Hobbes, that I do good actions *for* the pleasure of a good conscience; and so, after all, I am only a refined sensualist! Heaven bless you, and mend your logic! Don't you see that if conscience, which is in

its nature a consequence, were thus anticipated and made an antecedent — a party instead of a judge — it would dishonour your draft upon it — it would not pay on demand? Don't you see that, in truth, the very fact of acting with this motive properly and logically destroys all claim upon conscience to give you any pleasure at all? [1831] [xviii]

The sum total of moral philosophy is found in this one question. Is *Good* a superfluous word, or mere lazy synonym for the pleasurable and its causes; at most, a mere modification to express degree and comparative duration of pleasure? Or the question may be more unanswerably stated thus, Is *good* superfluous as a word exponent of a *kind*? If it be, then moral philosophy is but a sub-division of physics. If not, then the writings of Paley and all his predecessors and disciples are false and *most* pernicious; and there is an emphatic propriety in the superlative, and in a sense which of itself would supply and exemplify the difference between *most* and *very*. [1832] [xix]

I deem it safer to say that in all the outward relations of this life, in all our outward conduct and actions, both in what we should do and in what we should abstain from, the dictates of virtue are the very same with those of self-interest, tending *to*, though they do not proceed *from*, the same point. For the outward object of virtue being the greatest producible sum of happiness of all men, it must needs include the object of an intelligent self-love, which is the greatest possible happiness of one individual; for what is true of all must be true of each. Hence, you cannot become better (that is, more virtuous), but you will become happier: and you cannot become worse (that is, more vicious), with-

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out an increase of misery (or at the best a proportional loss of enjoyment) as the consequence. . . .

If then the time has not yet come for anything higher, act on the maxim of seeking the most pleasure with the least pain: and, if only you do not seek where you yourself *know* it will not be found, this very pleasure and this freedom from the disquietude of pain may produce in you a state of being directly and indirectly favourable to the germination and up-spring of a nobler seed. . . .

Pleasure (and happiness in its proper sense is but the continuity and sum-total of the pleasure which is allotted or happens to a man . . .) pleasure, I say, consists in the harmony between the specific excitability of a living creature, and the exciting causes correspondent thereto. Considered therefore exclusively in and for itself, the only question is, *quantum*, not *quale*? *How much on the whole?* the contrary, that is, the painful and disagreeable having been subtracted. The quality is a matter of *taste: et de gustibus non est disputandum*. No man can judge for another.

[xx] [1825]

Happiness in general may be defined, not the aggregate of pleasurable sensations — for that is either a dangerous error and the creed of sensualists, or else a mere translation or wordy paraphrase — but the state of that person who, in order to enjoy his nature in the highest manifestation of conscious *feeling*, has no need of doing wrong, and who, in order to do right, is under no necessity of abstaining from

[xxi] enjoyment. [1805]

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(b) THE IDEALIST METHOD

There are three ways of investigating a subject:

1. In the first mode, you begin with a definition, and that definition is necessarily assumed as the truth. As the argument proceeds, the conclusion from the first proposition becomes the base of the second, and so on. Now, it is quite impossible that you can be sure that you have included all the necessary, and none but the necessary, terms in your definition; as, therefore, you proceed, the original speck of error is multiplied at every remove; the same infirmity of knowledge besetting each successive definition. Hence you may set out, like Spinoza, with all but the truth, and end with a conclusion which is altogether monstrous . . . The chief use of this first mode of discussion is to sharpen the wit, for which purpose it is the best exercitation.

2. The historical mode is a very common one: in it the author professes to find out the truth by collecting the facts of the case and tracing them downwards; but this mode is worse than the other. Suppose the question is as to the true essence and character of the English constitution. First, where will you begin your collection of facts? Where will you end it? What facts will you select, and how do you know that the class of facts which you select are necessary terms in the premisses, and that other classes of facts, which you neglect, are not necessary? And how do you distinguish phenomena which proceed from disease or accident, from those which are the genuine fruits of the essence of the constitution? What can be more striking, in illustration of the utter inadequacy of this line of investigation, than the political treatises and constitutional histories which we have in every library? A Whig proves his case convincingly to

the reader who knows nothing beyond his author: then comes an old Tory (Carte, for instance) and ferrets up a hamperful of conflicting documents and notices, which proves *his* case *per contra*. A takes this class of facts; B takes that class: each proves something true, neither proves *the* truth, or anything like *the* truth; that is, the whole truth.

3. You must, therefore, commence with the philosophic idea of the thing, the true nature of which you wish to find out and manifest. You must carry your rule ready-made if you wish to measure aright. If you ask me how I can know that this idea — my own invention — is the truth, by which the phenomena of history are to be explained, I answer: in the same way exactly that you know that your eyes were made to see with; and that it is because you *do* see with them. If I propose to you an idea, or self-realizing theory, of the constitution, which shall manifest itself as in existence from the earliest times to the present — which shall comprehend within it *all* the facts which history has preserved, and shall give them a meaning as interchangeably causals or effects; — if I show you that such an event or reign was an obliquity to the right hand, and how produced, and such other event an obliquity to the left, and whence originating, — that the growth was stopped here, accelerated there, — that such a tendency is, and always has been, corroborative, and such other tendency destructive, of the main progress of the idea towards realization; — if this idea, not only like a kaleidoscope, shall reduce all the miscellaneous fragments into order, but shall also minister strength and knowledge and light to the true patriot and statesman for working out the bright thought, and bringing the glorious embryo to a perfect birth: — then, I think, I have a right to say that the idea which led to this is not only true, but the truth, the

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only truth. To set up for a statesman upon historical knowledge only, is as about as wise as to set up for a musician by the purchase of some score flutes, fiddles and horns. In order to make music, you must know how to play; in order to make your facts speak truth, you must know what the truth is which *ought* to be proved, — the ideal truth, the truth which was consciously or unconsciously, strongly or weakly, wisely or blindly, intended at all times. [xxii]

The commanding knowledge, the power of truth, given or obtained by contemplating the subject in the frontal mirror of the Idea, is in Scripture ordinarily expressed by vision . . . And of the many political *ground-truths* contained in the Old Testament, I cannot recall one more worthy to be selected as the *Moral* and L'Envoy of a Universal History, than the text in Proverbs, WHERE NO VISION IS, THE PEOPLE PERISHETH. . . . [xxxiii]

By the *idea*, I mean . . . that conception of a thing which is not abstracted from any particular state, form or mode, in which the thing may happen to exist at this or at that time; nor yet generalized from any number or succession of such forms or modes; but which is given by the knowledge of *its ultimate aim*. [xxiv]

A conception consists in a conscious act of the understanding, bringing any given object or impression into the same class with any number or other objects or impressions, by means of some character or characters common to them all. *Concipimus, id est, capimus hoc cum illo*, — we take hold of both at once, we *comprehend* a thing, when we have learnt to comprise it in a known *class*. On the other hand, it is the privilege of the few to possess an idea: of the generality of men, it might be more truly affirmed that they are possessed by it.

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By way of illustration take the following. Every reader of Rousseau, or of Hume's Essays, will understand me when I refer to the Original Social Contract, assumed by Rousseau, and by other and wiser men before him, as the basis of all legitimate government. Now, if this be taken as the assertion of an historical fact, or as the application of a conception, generalized from ordinary compacts between man and man, or nation and nation, to an actual occurrence in the first ages of the world; namely, the formation of the first contract in which men covenanted with each other to associate, or in which a multitude entered into a compact with a few, the one to be governed and the other to govern, under certain declared conditions; I shall run little hazard at this time of day in declaring the pretended fact a pure fiction, and the conception of such a fact an idle fancy. It is at once false and foolish. For what if an original contract had actually been entered into and formally recorded? Still I cannot see what addition of moral force would be gained by the fact. The same sense of moral obligation which binds us to keep it must have pre-existed in the same force and in relation to the same duties, impelling our ancestors to make it. For what could it do more than bind the contracting parties to act for the general good, according to their best lights and opportunities? It is evident that no specific scheme or constitution can derive any other claim to our reverence than that which the presumption of its necessity or fitness for the general good shall give it; and which claim of course ceases, or rather is reversed, as soon as this general presumption of its utility had given place to as general a conviction of the contrary. It is true, indeed, that from duties anterior to the formation of the contract, because they arise out of the very constitution of our humanity, which supposes the social

state — it is true, that in order to a rightful removal of the institution, or law, thus agreed on, it is required that the conviction of its expediency shall be as general as the presumption of its fitness was at the time of its establishment. This, the first of the two great paramount interests of the social state demands, namely, that of permanence; but to attribute more than this to any fundamental articles, passed into law by any assembly of individuals, is an injustice to their successors, and a high offence against the other great interest of the social state, namely — its progressive improvement. The conception, therefore, of an original contract, is, we repeat, incapable of historic proof as a fact, and it is senseless as a theory.

But if instead of the *conception* or *theory* of an original social contract, you say the *idea* of an ever-originating social contract, this is so certain and so indispensable, that it constitutes the whole ground of the difference between subject and serf, between a commonwealth and a slave-plantation . . . [*It is*] a very natural and significant mode of [xxv] expressing the reciprocal duties of subject and sovereign . . . if there be any difference between a government and a band of robbers, an act of consent must be supposed on the part of the people governed . . . And this again is evolved out of the [xxvi] yet higher idea of *person*, in contra-distinction from *thing* — all social law and justice being grounded on the principle that a person can never, but by his own fault, become a *thing*, or, without grievous wrong be treated as such: and the distinction consisting in this, that a thing may be used altogether and merely as the *means* to an end; but the person must always be included in the *end*: his interest must form a part of the object, a *means* to which he, by consent, i.e. by his own act, makes himself. . . .

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Now, notwithstanding the late wonderful spread of learning throughout the community, and though the schoolmaster and the lecturer are abroad, the hind and the woodman may very conceivably pass from cradle to coffin without having once contemplated this idea so as to be conscious of the same. And there would be even an improbability that they possessed the power of presenting this Idea to the minds of others, or even to their own thoughts, verbally, as a distinct proposition. But no man who has ever listened to labourers of this rank in any alehouse, over the Saturday night's jug of beer, discussing the injustice of the present rate of wages, and the iniquity of their being paid in part out of the parish poor-rates, will doubt for a moment that they are fully possessed by the idea.

In close, though not perhaps obvious connection, with this, is the idea of moral freedom, as the ground of our proper responsibility. Speak to a young Liberal . . . he will perhaps . . . proceed to assure you that the liberty of the will is an impossible conception, *a contradiction in terms* . . . Converse on the same subject with a plain, single-minded, yet reflecting neighbour, and he may probably say (as St. Augustine had said long before him, in reply to the question, What is Time?) I know it well enough when you do not ask me. But alike with both the supposed parties, the self-complacent student just as certainly as with your less positive neighbour — attend to their actions, their feelings, and even to their words: and you will be in ill luck if ten minutes pass without affording you full and satisfactory proof that the *idea* of man's moral freedom possesses and modifies their whole practical being, in all they say, in all they feel, in all they do and are done to: even as the spirit of life, which is contained in no vessel, because it permeates all.

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Just so is it with the constitution. Ask any of our politicians what is meant by the constitution, and it is ten to one that he will give you a false explanation, ex. gr. that it is the body of our laws, or that it is the Bill of Rights; or perhaps, if he have read Tom Payne, he may tell you that we have not yet got one; and yet not an hour may have elapsed since you heard the same individual denouncing, and possibly with good reason, this or that code of laws, the excise and revenue laws, or those for including pheasants or those for excluding Catholics, as altogether unconstitutional: and such and such acts of parliament as gross outrages on the constitution. . . .

But a Constitution is an idea arising out of the idea of a state; and because our whole history from Alfred onwards demonstrates the continued influence of such an idea, or ultimate aim, on the minds of our forefathers, in their characters and functions as public men; alike in what they resisted and in what they claimed; in the institutions and forms of polity which they established, and with regard to those against which they more or less successfully contended; and because the result has been a progressive, though not always a direct or equable advance in the gradual realization of the idea; and that it is actually, though even because it is an idea it cannot be *adequately*, represented in a correspondent scheme of means really existing; we speak, and have a right to speak, of the idea itself, as actually existing, i.e. as a *principle*, existing in the only way in which a principle can exist—in the minds and consciences of the persons whose duties it prescribes and whose rights it determines . . . As no bridge ever did or can possess the demonstrable perfections of the mathematical arch, so can no existing state adequately correspond to the *idea* of a state . . . In the same sense that the sciences of arithmetic and of geometry,

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that mind, that life itself, have reality; the constitution has real existence, and does not the less exist in reality because it both *is*, and *exists as*, an IDEA.

There is yet another ground for the affirmation of its reality; that, as the fundamental idea, it is at the same time the final criterion by which all particular frames of government must be tried: for here only can we find the great constructive principles of our representative system (I use the term in its widest sense, in which the crown itself is included as representing the unity of the people, the true and primary sense of the word majesty); those principles, I say, in the light of which it can alone be ascertained what are excrescences, symptoms of distemperature and marks of degeneration; and what are native growths, or changes naturally attendant on the progressive development of the original germ, symptoms of immaturity perhaps, but not of disease; or at worst, modifications of the growth by the defective or faulty, but remediless, or only gradually remediable, qualities of the soil and surrounding elements.

There are two other characters distinguishing the class of substantive truths, or truth-powers, here spoken of . . . The first is, that in distinction from the *conception* of a thing, which being abstracted or generalized from one or more particular states or modes, is necessarily posterior in order of thought to the thing thus conceived, — as an idea, on the contrary, is in order of thought always and of necessity contemplated as antecedent. In the idea or principle, Life, for instance — the vital *functions* are the result of the organization; but this organization supposes and pre-supposes the vital *principle*. . . .

This is the first. The other distinctive mark may be most conveniently given in the form of a caution. We should be made more aware, namely, that the particular form, con-

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struction or model that may be best fitted to render the idea intelligible, and most effectually serve the purpose of an instructive *diagram*, is not necessarily the mode or form in which it actually arrives at realization. . . . [xxvii]

In my judgment, no man can rightly apprehend an abuse till he has first mastered the idea of the use of an institution. How fine, for example, is the idea of the unhired magistracy of England, taking in and linking together the duke to the country gentleman in the primary distribution of justice, or in the preservation of order and execution of law at least throughout the country! Yet some men never seem to have thought of it for one moment, but as connected with brewers and barristers and tyrannical Squire Westerns . . . The [xxviii] corruptions of a system can be duly appreciated by those only who have contemplated the system in that ideal state of perfection exhibited by the reason; the nearest possible approximation to which under existing circumstances it is the business of the prudential understanding to realize. Those, on the other hand, who commence the examination of a system by identifying it with its abuses or imperfections, degrade their understanding into the pander of their passions, and are sure to prescribe remedies more dangerous than the disease. . . . [xxix]

(C) NATURE AND PURPOSES OF THE STATE

(i) *The State as an organism*

It would be difficult in the whole compass of language to find a metaphor so commensurate, so pregnant, or suggesting so many points of elucidation, as that of *Body Politic*, as the exponent of a State or Realm . . . The correspondence

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between the Body Politic and the Body Natural holds even
[xxx] in the detail of application . . . The perfect frame of a man
is the perfect frame of a State; and in the light of this idea we
[xxxi] must read Plato's *Republic* . . . The integral parts, classes or
orders, are so balanced or interdependent as to constitute,
[xxxii] more or less, an organic whole.

The difference between an inorganic and an organic body lies in this: In the first — a sheaf of corn — the whole is nothing more than a collection of the individual parts or phenomena. In the second — a man — the whole is the effect of, or results from, the parts; it — the whole — is everything, and the parts are nothing. A State is an idea intermediate between the two — the whole being a result from, and not a mere total of, the parts, and yet not so merging the constituent parts in the result, but that the individual
[xxxiii] exists integrally within it. . . .

The true patriot . . . will reverence not only whatever tends to make the component individuals more happy, and more worthy of happiness; but likewise whatever tends to bind them more closely together as a people; that as a multitude of parts and functions make up one human body, so the whole multitude of his countrymen may, by the visible and invisible influences of religion, language, laws, customs, and the reciprocal dependence and reaction of trade and agriculture, be organized into one body politic. But much as he desires to see *all* become a whole, he places limits even to this wish, and abhors that system of policy which would blend men into a state by the dissolution of all those virtues which make them happy and estimable as individuals. . . .

The sect of economists . . . worship a kind of non-entity under the different words, 'the state', 'the whole', 'the

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society', etc., and to this idol they make bloodier sacrifices than ever the Mexicans did to Tescalipoca. All, that is, each and every sentient being in a given tract, are made diseased and vicious, in order that each may become useful to all, or the state, or the society, — that is, to the word 'all', the word 'state', or the word 'society' . . . What is this 'society', this 'whole', this 'state'? is it anything else but a word of convenience to express at once the aggregate of confederated individuals living in a certain district? . . . And think you it possible that ten thousand happy human beings can exist together without increasing each other's happiness, or that it will not overflow into countless channels, and diffuse itself through the rest of society? [xxxiv]

Unlike a million of tigers, a million of men is very different from one man. Each man in a numerous society is not only co-existent with, but virtually organized into, the multitude of which he is an integral part. His *idem* is modified by the *alter*. And there arise impulses and objects from this *synthesis* of the *alter et idem*, myself and my neighbour. This again is strictly analogous to what takes place in the vital organization of the individual man. [xxxv]

It is high time that the subjects of Christian Governments should be taught that neither historically or morally, in fact or by right, have men made the State; but that the State, and that alone, makes them men . . . that human faculties cannot be fully developed but by society, and a man *per se* is a contradiction; he is only potentially a man, not actually . . . that the flux of individuals in any one moment of existence is there for the sake of the State, far more than the State for them, though both positions are true proportionally . . . that in all political revolutions, whether for the weal or chastisement of a nation, the people are but the sprigs and boughs in

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a forest, tossed against each other, or moved all in the same direction, by an agency in which their own will has the least [xxxvi] share.

(ii) *The Spirit of a Nation*

That there is an invisible spirit that breathes through a whole people, is participated in by all, though not by all alike; a spirit which gives a colour and character to their virtues and vices, so that the same actions . . . are yet not the same in a Spaniard as they would be in a Frenchman, I hold for an undeniable truth, without the admission of which all history would be riddle. I hold likewise that the difference of nations, their relative grandeur and meanness, all, in short, which they are or do . . . all in which they persevere as a nation, through successions of changing individuals, are the [xxxvii] result of this spirit.

(iii) *Patriotism the basis of Internationalism*

I, for one, do not call the sod beneath my feet my country. But language, religion, laws, government, blood — identity [xxxviii] in these makes men of one country. . . .

LINES WRITTEN IN THE HARTZ FOREST, 1799

. . . My native land!
Filled with the thought of thee this heart was proud,
Yea, mine eye swam with tears; that all the view
From sovran Brocken, woods and woody hills,
Floated away, like a departing dream,
Feeble and dim! Stranger, these impulses
Blame thou not lightly; nor will I profane,
With hasty judgment or injurious doubt,

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That man's sublimer spirit, who can feel
That God is everywhere! The God who framed
Mankind to be one mighty family,
Himself our Father, and the World our Home.

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... But, O dear Britain! O my Mother Isle!
Needs must thou prove a name most dear and holy
To me, a son, a brother, and a friend,
A husband and a father! who revere
All bonds of natural love, and find them all
Within the limits of thy rocky shores.
O native Britain! O my Mother Isle!
How shouldst thou prove aught else but dear and holy
To me, who from thy lakes and mountain-rills,
Thy clouds, thy quiet dales, thy rocks and seas,
Have drunk in all my intellectual life,
All sweet sensations, all ennobling thoughts,
All adoration of the God in nature,
All lovely and all honourable things,
Whatever makes this mortal spirit feel
The joy and greatness of its future being?
There lives nor form nor feeling in my soul
Unborrowed from my country! O divine
And beauteous island! thou hast been my sole
And most magnificent temple, in the which
I walk with awe, and sing my stately songs,
Loving the God that made me!

(FEARS IN SOLITUDE, 1798)

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In two points of view I reverence man; first, as a citizen, a part of, or in order to, a nation; and, secondly, as a Christian. If men are neither the one nor the other, but a mere aggregation of individual bipeds, who acknowledge no

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national unity, nor believe with me in Christ, I have no more personal sympathy with them than with the dust beneath my feet.

The cosmopolitanism which does not spring out of, and blossom upon, the deep-rooted stem of nationality, is a spurious and rotten growth.

The objects of the patriot are, that his countrymen should, as far as circumstances permit, enjoy what the Creator designed for the enjoyment of animals endowed with reason, and of course develop those faculties which were given them to be developed. He would do his best that every one of his countrymen should possess what all men may and should possess, and that a sufficient number should be enabled and encouraged to acquire those excellencies which, though not necessary or possible *for* all men, are yet *to* all men useful and honourable. He knows that patriotism itself is a necessary link in the golden chain of our affections and virtues, and turns away with indignant scorn from the false philosophy or mistaken religion which would persuade him that cosmopolitanism is nobler than nationality, and the human race a sublimer object of love than a people; that Plato, Luther, Newton, and their equals, formed themselves neither in the market nor the senate, but in the world, and for all men of all ages. True! But where, and among whom, are these giant exceptions produced? In the wide empires of Asia, where millions of human beings acknowledge no other bond but that of a common slavery, and are distinguished on the map but by a name which themselves perhaps never heard, or hearing abhor? No! In a circle defined by human affections, the first firm sod within which becomes sacred beneath the quickened step of the returning citizen — here, where the powers and interests of men spread without confusion

through a common sphere, like the vibrations propagated in the air by a single voice, distinct yet coherent, and all uniting to express one thought and the same feeling! . . .

Here, from within this circle defined, as light by shade, or rather as light within light, by its intensity, here alone, and only within these magic circles, rise up the awful spirits whose words are oracles for mankind, whose love embraces all countries, and whose voice sounds through all ages! Here, and here only, may we confidently expect those mighty minds to be reared and ripened, whose names are naturalized in foreign lands, the sure fellow-travellers of civilization! and yet render their own country dearer and more proudly dear to their own countrymen. This is indeed cosmopolitanism, at once the nurse and nursling of patriotic affection! This, and this alone, is genuine philanthropy, which, like the olive tree, sacred to concord and to wisdom, fattens not exhausts the soil from which it sprang and in which it remains rooted. It is feebleness only which cannot be generous without injustice, or just without ceasing to be generous. . . . [xliii]

If then in order to be men we must be patriots, and patriotism cannot exist without national independence we need no new or particular code of morals to justify us in placing and preserving our country in that relative situation which is most favourable to its independence. But the true patriot is aware that this object is not to be accomplished by a system of general conquest, such as was pursued by Philip of Macedon and his son, nor yet by the political annihilation of the one state which happens to be its most formidable rival . . . for rivalry between two nations conduces to the independence of both, calls forth or fosters all the virtues by which national security is maintained. Still less by the former; for the victor nation itself must at length, by the very extension

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of its own conquests, sink into a mere province; nay, it will most probably become the most abject portion of the empire, and the most cruelly oppressed, both because it will be more feared and suspected by the common tyrant, and because it will be the sink and centre of his luxury and corruption. Even in cases of actual injury and just alarm the patriot sets bounds to the reprisal of national vengeance, and contents himself with such securities as are compatible with the welfare, though not with the ambitious projects, of the nation whose aggressions had given the provocation: for, as patriotism inspires no super-human faculties, neither can it dictate any conduct which would require such. He is too conscious of his own ignorance of the future, to dare extend his calculations into remote periods; nor, because he is a statesman, arrogates to himself the cares of Providence and the government of the world. How does he know but that the very independence and consequent virtues of the nation which, in the anger of cowardice, he would fain reduce to absolute insignificance, and rob even of its ancient name, may in some future emergency be the destined guardians of his own country; and that the power which now alarms, may hereafter protect and preserve it? The experience of history authorizes not only the possibility, but even the probability, of such an event . . .

Without local attachment, without national honour, we shall resemble a swarm of insects that settle on the fruits of the earth to corrupt and consume them, rather than men who [xliv] love and cleave to the land of their forefathers.

(iv) *The Law of Nations*

It were absurd to suppose that individuals should be under a law of moral obligation, and yet that a million of the same

individuals, acting collectively or through representatives, should be exempt from all law; for morality is no accident of human nature, but its essential characteristic; a being absolutely without morality is either a beast or a fiend, according as we conceive this want of conscience to be natural or self-produced; or . . . according as the being is conceived without the law, or in unceasing and irretrievable rebellion to it. Yet, were it possible to conceive a man wholly immoral, it would remain impossible to conceive him without a moral obligation to be otherwise; and none but a madman will imagine that the essential qualities of anything can be altered by its becoming part of an aggregate; that a grain of corn, for instance, shall cease to contain flour as soon as it is part of a peck or bushel. It is therefore grounded in the nature of the thing, and not by a mere fiction of the mind, that wise men who have written on the law of nations have always considered the several states of the civilized world as so many individuals, and equally with the latter under a moral obligation to exercise their free agency within such bounds as render it compatible with the existence of free agency in others. . . .

But in all morality, though the principle, which is the abiding spirit of the law, remains perpetual and unaltered, even as that Supreme Reason in whom and from whom it has its being, yet the letter of the law, that is the application of it to particular instances, and the mode of realizing it in actual practice, must be modified by the existing circumstances. What we should desire to do, the conscience alone will inform us; but how and when we are to make the attempt and to what extent it is in our power to accomplish it, are questions for the judgment, and require an acquaintance with facts and their bearings on each other. . . .

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As the circumstances, then, under which men act as statesmen, are different from those under which they act as individuals, a proportionate difference must be expected in the practical rules by which their public conduct is to be determined. Let me not be misunderstood: I speak of a difference in the practical rules, not in the moral law itself which these rules point out, the means of administering in particular cases, and under given circumstances. The spirit continues one and the same, though it may vary its form according to the element into which it is transported. This difference, with its grounds and consequences, it is the province of the philosophical juspublicist to discover and display; and exactly in this point (I speak with unfeigned diffidence) it appears to me that the writers on the law of nations whose works I have had the opportunity of studying, have been least successful.

In what does the law of nations differ from the laws enacted by a particular state for its own subjects? The solution is evident. The law of nations, considered apart from the common principle of all morality, is not fixed or positive in itself, nor supplied with any regular means of being enforced. Like those duties in private life which, for the same reasons, moralists have entitled imperfect duties . . . the law of nations appeals only to the conscience and prudence of the parties concerned. Wherein then does it differ from the moral laws which the reason, considered as conscience, dictates for the conduct of individuals? This is a more difficult question; but my answer would be determined by, and grounded on, the obvious differences of the circumstances in the two cases . . . In what, then, does the law between state and state differ from that between man and man? . . . The law of nations is the law of common honesty,

modified by the circumstances in which states differ from individuals . . . The differences may be reduced to this one point; that the influence of example in any extraordinary case, as the possible occasion of an action apparently like, though in reality very different, is of considerable importance in the moral calculations of an individual; but of little, if any, in the case of a nation . . . In extraordinary cases it is ridiculous to suppose that the conduct of states will be determined by example. We know that they neither will, nor in the nature of things can, be determined by any other consideration but that of the imperious circumstances which render a particular measure advisable . . . Individuals are and must be under positive laws . . . But states neither are, nor can be, under positive laws. The only fixed part of the law of nations is the spirit; the letter of the law consists wholly in the circumstances to which the spirit of the law is applied. It is mere puerile declamation to rail against a country, as having imitated the very measures for which it had most blamed its ambitious enemy, if that enemy had previously changed all the relative circumstances which had existed for him, and therefore rendered his conduct iniquitous; but which, having been removed, however iniquitously, cannot without absurdity be supposed any longer to control the measures of an innocent nation, necessitated to struggle for its own safety; especially when the measures in question were adopted for the very purpose of restoring those circumstances. . . .

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Till states are in that self-standingness which admits of reciprocal action, the epoch of international morality is not yet come, the records do not as yet belong to the World of Freedom, and we read of these things Wars and conquests as of the most interesting parts of Natural History. None but

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the Vulgar felt about Napoleon as they do about Alexander the Great. Napoleon was an APE. The difference in character in the conflicting nations was wanting. Not Greeks and Persians, but a wanton, wicked civil war of a depraved knot of Co-Europeans against men of the same arts, sciences, and habits. France as a State obtaining no additional means of perfecting herself, it was no expansion required in order to self-development, and therefore no expansion at all. War at present ought to be spoken of by all men of genius as contemptible, vulgar, the dotage of second childhood, the lechery [xlvi] of Barrenness.

FIRE, FAMINE AND SLAUGHTER (A WAR ECLOGUE)

1798

Slaughter: He came by stealth and unlocked my den,
And I have drunk the blood since then
Of thrice three hundred thousand men.

.
Famine: Thanks, sister, thanks! The men have bled,
Their wives and their children faint for bread.
I stood in a swampy field of battle;
With bones and skulls I made a rattle,
To frighten the wolf and carrion-crow
And the homeless dog — but they would not go.
So off I flew: for how could I bear
To see them gorge their dainty fare?
I heard a groan and a peevish squall,
And through the chink of a cottage-wall . . .
A baby beat its dying mother:
I had starved the one and was starving the other! . . .

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Fire: Sisters! I from Ireland came!
Hedge and corn-fields all aflame,
I triumphed o'er the setting sun!
And all the while the work was done,
On as I strode with my huge strides,
I flung back my head and I held my sides. . . .

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FEARS IN SOLITUDE

1798

. . . Secure from actual warfare, we have loved
To swell the war-whoop, passionate for war!
Alas! for ages ignorant of all
Its ghastlier workings (famine or blue plague,
Battle, or siege, or flight through wintry snows,)
We, this whole people, have been clamorous
For war and bloodshed; animating sports,
The which we pay for as a thing to talk of,
Spectators and not combatants! . . .
We send our mandates for the certain death
Of thousands and ten thousands! Boys and girls,
And women, that would groan to see a child
Pull off an insect's leg, all read of war,
The best amusement for our morning meal!
The poor wretch, who has learnt his only prayers
From curses, who knows scarcely words enough
To ask a blessing from his Heavenly Father,
Becomes a fluent phraseman, absolute
And technical in victories and defeats,
And all our daily terms for fratricide;
Terms which we trundle smoothly o'er our tongues

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Like mere abstractions, empty sounds to which
We join no feeling and attach no form!

... Therefore, evil days
Are coming on us, O my countrymen!
And what if all-avenging Providence,
Strong and retributive, should make us know
The meaning of our words, force us to feel
The desolation and the agony

[xlix] Of our fierce doings? . . .

(v) *Purposes of the State*

The three great ends which a statesman ought to propose to himself in the government of a nation are: (1) Security to [1] possessors; (2) Facility to acquirers; and (3) Hope to all.

Let us suppose the negative ends of a State already attained, namely, its own safety by means of its own strength, and the protection of person and property for all its members. There will then remain its positive ends: 1. To make the means of subsistence more easy to each individual, 2. to secure to each of its members the hope of bettering his own condition and that of his children, 3. the development of those faculties which are essential to his humanity, that is, to his rational and moral being. Under the last head I do not mean those degrees of intellectual cultivation which distinguish man from man in the same civilized society, but those only that raise the civilized man above the barbarian, the savage and the brute. I require, however, on the part of the State, in behalf of all its members, not only the outward means of knowing their essential duties and dignities as men and free men, but likewise, and more especially, the discouragement of all such tenures and relations as must in the very nature of things render this knowledge inert and cause

the good seed to perish as it falls. Such at least is the appointed aim of a state: and at whatever distance from the ideal mark the existing circumstances of a nation may unhappily place the actual statesmen, still every movement ought to be in this direction. But the negative merit of not forwarding — the exemption from the crime of necessitating — the debasement and virtual disfranchisement of any class of the community, may be demanded of every State under all circumstances: and the Government that pleads difficulties in repulse or demur of this claim impeaches its own wisdom and fortitude.

Nothing more can be asked of the State, no other duty is imposed on it, than to withhold or retract all extrinsic or artificial aids to an injurious system: or, at the utmost, to invalidate in extreme cases such claims as have arisen indirectly from the letter or unforeseen operations of particular statutes: claims that instead of being contained in the rights of its proprietary trustees are encroachments on its own rights, and a destructive trespass on a part of its own inalienable and untransferable property — I mean the health, strength, honesty, and filial love of its children. An injurious system, the connivance at which we scarcely dare more than regret in the Cabinet or Senate of an Empire, may justify an earnest reprobation in the management of private estates: provided always that the system only be denounced and the pleadings confined to the court of conscience. For from this court only can the redress be awarded. All reform or innovation not won from the free agent by the presentation of juster views and nobler interests, and which does not leave the merit of having affected it sacred to the individual proprietor, it were folly to propose and worse than folly to attempt. [11]

I have no faith in Act of Parliament reform. All the great

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— the permanently great — things that have been achieved in the world have been so achieved by individuals, working from the instinct of genius or of goodness. The rage nowadays is all the other way: the individual is supposed capable of nothing; there must be organization, classification, machinery, etc., as if the capital of national morality could be [lii] increased by making a joint-stock of it.

(vi) *The State in relation to the Church*

A State, in idea, is the opposite of a Church. A State regards classes, and not individuals; and it estimates classes, not by internal merit, but external accidents, as property, birth, etc. But a Church does the reverse of this, and disregards all external accidents, and looks at men as individual persons, allowing no gradations of ranks, but such as greater or less wisdom, learning and holiness ought to confer. A Church is, therefore, in idea, the only pure democracy. The Church, so considered, and the State exclusively of the Church, constitute together the idea of a [liii] State in its largest sense.

A democracy, according to the prescript of pure reason, would in fact be a Church. There would be focal points in [liv] it, but no superior . . . In it, persons are alone considered, [lv] and one person *a priori* is equal to another person.

The State, with respect to the different sects of religion under its protection, should resemble a well-drawn portrait. Let there be half a score individuals looking at it, every one sees its eyes and its benignant smile directed towards [lvi] himself.

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(d) THE ENGLISH CONSTITUTION

[*Excerpts from 'The Church and State according to the Idea of each', 1830.*]

(i) *Permanence and Progression*

A Constitution is the attribute of a state, i.e. of a body politic, having the principle of its unity within itself, whether by concentration of its forces, as a constitutional pure monarchy, which, however, has hitherto continued to be *ens rationale*, unknown to history . . . or, — with which we are alone concerned — by equipoise and interdependency: the *lex equilibrii*, the principle prescribing the means and conditions by and under which this balance is to be established and preserved, being the constitution of the state. It is the chief of many blessings derived from the insular character and circumstances of our country, that our social institutions have formed themselves out of our proper needs and interests that long and fierce as the birth-struggle and the growing pains have been, the antagonist powers have been of our own system, and have been allowed to work out their final balance with less disturbance from external forces, than was possible in the Continental states. . . .

Now in every country of civilized men, acknowledging the rights of property, and by means of determined boundaries and common laws united into one people or nation, the two antagonist powers, or opposite interests, of the state, under which all other state interests are comprised, are those of PERMANENCE and of PROGRESSION.

It will not be necessary to enumerate the several causes that combine to connect the permanence of a state with the land and the landed property. To found a family, and to

convert his wealth into land, are twin thoughts, births of the same moment, in the mind of the opulent merchant when he thinks of reposing from his labours. From the class of the *Novi Homines* he redeems himself by becoming the staple ring of the chain by which the present will become connected with the past; and the test and evidency of permanence afforded. To the same principle appertain primogeniture and hereditary titles, and the influence which these exert in accumulating large masses of property, and in counteracting the antagonist and dispersive forces which the follies, the vices, and the misfortunes of individuals can scarcely fail to supply. To this, likewise, tends the proverbial obduracy of prejudices characteristic of the humbler tillers of the soil, and their aversion even to benefits that are offered in the form of innovations. But why need I attempt to explain a fact which no thinking man will deny, and where the admission of the fact is all that my argument requires?

On the other hand, with as little chance of contradiction, I may assert that the progression of a state in the arts and comforts of life, in the diffusion of the information and knowledge useful or necessary for all; in short, all advances in civilization, and the rights and privileges of citizens, are especially connected with, and derived from the four classes of the mercantile, the manufacturing, the distributive and the professional.

[e.g. *Italy, where Austrian and Spanish overlords have degraded the profession of trade, and where agriculture thrives, enjoys every gift of God — except freedom.*]

We have thus divided the subjects of the state into two orders, the agricultural or possessors of the land: and the merchant, manufacturer, the distributive, and the profes-

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sional bodies, under the common name of citizens. And we have now to add that by the nature of things common to every civilized country, at all events by the course of events in this country, the first is subdivided into two classes, which, in imitation of our old law books, we may intitle the Major and Minor Barons; both these, either by their interests or by the very effect of their situation, circumstances, and the nature of their employment, vitally connected with the permanency of the state, its institutions, rights, customs, manners, privileges — and as such, opposed to the inhabitants of ports, towns and cities, who are in like manner and from like causes more especially connected with its progression. I scarcely need say that in a very advanced stage of civilization the two orders of society will more and more modify and leaven each other, yet never so completely but that the distinct character remains legible, and, to use the words of the Roman Emperor, even in what is struck out the erasure is manifest. At all times, the lower of the two ranks of which the first order consists, or the Franklins, will in their political sympathies draw more nearly to the antagonist order than the first rank. On these facts, which must at all times have existed, though in very different degrees of prominence or maturity, the principle of our constitution was established.

The total interests of the country, the interests of the STATE, were entrusted to a great council or parliament, composed of two Houses. The first consisting exclusively of the Major Barons, who at once stood as the guardians and sentinels of their several estates and privileges, and the representatives of the common weal. The Minor Barons, or Franklins, too numerous, and yet individually too weak, to sit and maintain their rights in person, were to choose among

the worthiest of their own body representatives, and these in such number as to form an important though minor proportion of a second House — the majority of which was formed by the representatives chosen by the cities, ports and boroughs; which representatives ought on principle to have been elected not only by, but from among, the members of the manufacturing, mercantile, distributive and professional classes. These four classes, by an arbitrary but convenient use of the phrase, I will designate by the name of the Personal Interest, as the exponent of all moveable and personal possessions, including skill and acquired knowledge, the moral and intellectual stock in trade of the professional man and the artist, no less than the raw materials, and the means of elaborating, transporting and distributing them.

Thus in the theory of the constitution it was provided that even though both divisions of the Landed Interest should combine in any legislative attempt to encroach on the rights and privileges of the Personal Interest, yet the representatives of the latter forming the clear and effectual majority of the lower House, the attempt must be abortive: the majority of votes in both Houses being indispensable in order to the presentation of a bill for the Complementary Act—that is, to make it a law of the land. By force of the same mechanism must every attack be baffled that should be made by the representatives of the minor landowners in concert with the burgesses on the existing rights and privileges of the peerage, and of the hereditary aristocracy, of which the peerage is the summit and the natural protector. Lastly, should the nobles join to invade the rights and franchises of the Franklins and the Yeomanry, the sympathy of interest by which the inhabitants of cities, towns and sea-ports are linked to the great body of the agricultural fellow-commoners

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who supply their markets and form their principal customers, could not fail to secure a united and successful resistance. Nor would this affinity of interest find a slight support in the sympathy of feeling between the burgess senators and the county representatives, as members of the same House, and in the consciousness which the former have of the dignity conferred on them by the latter. For the notion of superior dignity will always be attached in the minds of men to that kind of property with which they have most associated the idea of permanence: and the land is the synonym of country.

That the burgesses were not bound to elect representatives from among their own order, individuals *bona fide* belonging to one or other of the four divisions above enumerated; that the elective franchise of the towns, ports, etc., first invested with borough-rights, was not made conditional, and to a certain extent at least dependent on their retaining the same comparative wealth and independence, and rendered subject to a periodical revisal and re-adjustment; that in consequence of these and other causes, the very weights intended for the effectual counterpoise of the great landholders have in the course of events been shifted into the opposite scale; that they now constitute a large proportion of the political power and influence of the very class whose personal cupidity, and whose partial views of the landed interest at large they were meant to keep in check; these are no part of the constitution, no essential ingredients in the idea, but apparent defects and imperfections in its realization — which, however, we will neither regret nor set about amending, till we have seen whether an equivalent force had not arisen to supply the deficiency — a force great enough to have destroyed the equilibrium, had not such a transfer

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taken place previously to, or at the same time with, the operation of the new forces. Roads, canals, machinery, the press, the periodical and daily press, the might of public opinion, the consequent increasing desire of popularity among public men and functionaries of every description, and the increasing necessity of public character as a means or condition of political influence — I need but mention these to stand acquitted of having started a vague and naked possibility in extenuation of an evident and palpable abuse.

But whether this conjecture be well or ill grounded, the *principle* of the constitution remains the same. That harmonious balance of the two great correspondent, at once supporting and counterpoising, interests of the state, its permanence and its progression: that balance of the landed and the personal interests was to be secured by a Legislature of two Houses; the first consisting wholly of barons or landholders, permanent and hereditary senators; the second of the knights or minor barons, elected by, and as the representatives of, the remaining landed community, together with the burgesses, the representatives of the commercial, manufacturing, distributive and professional classes — the latter (the elective burgesses) constituting the major number. The king, meanwhile, in whom the executive power is vested, it will suffice at present to consider as the beam of the constitutional scales. A more comprehensive view of the kingly office must be deferred till the remaining problem (the idea of a national church) has been solved.

I must here entreat the reader to bear in mind what I have before endeavoured to impress on him, that I am not giving an historical account of the legislative body; nor can I be supposed to assert that such was the earliest mode or form in which the national council was constructed. My assertion

is simply this, that its formation has advanced in this direction. The line of evolution, however sinuous, has tended to this point, sometimes with, sometimes without, not seldom perhaps against, the intention of the individual actors, but always as if a power greater and better than the men themselves had intended it for them. Nor let it be forgotten that every new growth, every power and privilege, bought or extorted, has uniformly been claimed by an antecedent right; not acknowledged as a boon conferred, but both demanded and received as what had always belonged to them, though withheld by violence and the injury of the times. This, too, in cases where, if documents and historical records or even consistent traditions, had been required in evidence, the monarch would have had the better of the argument. But, in truth, it was no more than a *practical* way of saying: this or that is contained in the *idea* of our government, and it is a consequence of the 'Lex, Mater Legum' which, in the very first law of state ever promulgated in the land, was pre-supposed as the ground of that first law.

Before I conclude this part of my subject, I must press on your attention that the preceding is offered only as the constitutional idea of the *State*. In order to correct views respecting the constitution in the more enlarged sense of the term, viz, the constitution of the *Nation*, we must, in addition to a grounded knowledge of the *State*, have the right idea of the *National Church*. These are two poles of the same magnet; the magnet itself, which is constituted by them, is the CONSTITUTION of the nation.

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(ii) *Property as a Public Trust*

It was . . . common to all the primitive races, that in taking possession of a new country, and in the division of the land

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into heritable estates among the individual warriors or heads of families, a reserve should be made for the nation itself. The sum total of these heritable portions, appropriated each to an individual lineage, I beg leave to name the *PROPRIETY*; and to call the reserve above-mentioned the *NATIONALITY*; and likewise to employ the term *wealth* in that primary and wide sense which it retains in the term *Commonwealth*. In the establishment, then, of the landed *proprieties*, a *nationalty* was at the same time constituted: as a *wealth* not consisting of lands, but yet derivative from the land and rightfully inseparable from the same. These, the *Propriety* and the *Nationalty*, were the two constituent factors, the opposite, but correspondent and reciprocally supporting counterweights of the *commonwealth*; the existence of the one being the condition, and the perfecting, of the rightfulness of the other . . . The wealth appropriated was not so entirely a property as not to remain, to a certain extent, national; nor was the wealth reserved so exclusively [lviii] national as not to admit of individual tenure. . . .

With the Celtic, Gothic and Scandinavian, equally with the Hebrew tribes, Property by absolute right existed only in a tolerated alien; and there was everywhere a prejudice against the occupation expressly directed to its acquirement, viz., the trafficking with the current representatives of wealth. Even in that species of possession in which the right of the individual was the prominent relative character, the institution of the Jubilee provided against its degeneracy into the merely personal; reclaimed it for the state — that is, for the *line*, the heritage, as one of the permanent units or integral parts, the aggregate of which constitutes the *STATE* in that narrower and especial sense in which it has been distinguished from the *nation*. And to these permanent

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units, the calculating and governing *mind* of the state directs its attention, even as it is the depths, breadths, bays and windings or reaches of a river, that are the subject of the hydrographer, not the water-drops that at any moment constitute the stream. And on this point the greatest stress should be laid; this should be deeply impressed, carefully borne in mind, that the abiding interests, the estates and ostensible properties, not the persons as *persons*, are the proper subjects of the parliament or supreme council, as the representatives and plenipotentiaries of the state, i.e. of the PROPRIETY, and in distinction from the common-wealth, in which I comprise both the Propriety and the Nationalty. . . . [lix]

It was in the character of the King, as the majesty or symbolic unity of the whole nation, both of the state and of the persons; it was in the name of the KING, in whom both the propriety and the nationality ideally centred, and from whom as from a fountain they are ideally supposed to flow — it was in the name of the KING that the proclamation throughout the land, by sound of the trumpet, was made to all possessors: 'The land is not yours, saith the Lord, the land is mine. To you I lent it.' The voice of the trumpets is not, indeed, heard in this country. But no less intelligibly is it declared by the spirit and history of our laws, that the possession of a property not connected with especial duties, a property not fiduciary or official, but arbitrary and unconditional, was in the light of our forefathers the brand of a Jew and an alien; not the distinction, not the right, or honour, of an English baron or gentleman. [lx]

When shall we return to a sound conception of the right to property — namely, as being official, implying and demanding the performance of commensurate duties! Nothing but the most horrible perversion of humanity and

moral justice, under the specious name of political economy, could have blinded men to this truth as to the possession of land — the law of God having connected indissolubly the cultivation of every rood of earth with the maintenance and watchful labour of man. But money, stock, riches by credit, transferable and convertible at will, are under no such obligations; and, unhappily, it is from the selfish, autocratic possession of *such* property, that our landowners have learnt their present theory of trading with that which was never [lxi] meant to be an object of commerce.

(iii) *The National Church*

In relation to the National Church, Christianity or the Church of Christ, is a blessed accident, a providential boon . . . As the olive tree is said in its growth to fertilize the surrounding soil; to invigorate the roots of the vines in its immediate neighbourhood, and to improve the strength and flavour of the wines — such is the relation of the Christian and the National Church. But as the olive is not the same plant with the vine . . . even so is Christianity, and *a fortiori* any particular scheme of Theology derived and supposed (by its partizans) to be *deduced* from Christianity, no essential part of the *Being* of the *National Church*, however conducive [lxii] or even indispensable it may be to its well-being. . . .

After these introductory preparations, I can have no difficulty in setting forth the right idea of a national church, in the language of Elizabeth, the *third* great venerable estate of the realm . . . There remains for the third estate only that interest which is the ground, the necessary antecedent conditions of both the former. Now these depend on a continuing and progressive civilization. But civilization is itself but a mixed good, if not far more a corrupting influence, the

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hectic of disease, not the bloom of health, and the nation so distinguished more fitly to be called a varnished than a polished people; where this civilization is not grounded in *cultivation*, in the harmonious development of those qualities and faculties that characterize our *humanity*. We must be men in order to be citizens.

The Nationalty, therefore, was reserved for the support and maintenance of a permanent class or order, with the following duties. A certain smaller number were to remain at the fountain-heads of the humanities, in cultivating and enlarging the knowledge already possessed, and in watching over the interests of physical and moral science; being likewise the instructors of such as constituted, or were to constitute, the remaining more numerous classes of the order. This latter and far more numerous body were to be distributed throughout the country, so as not to leave the smallest integral part or division without a resident guide, guardian, and instructor; the objects and final intention of the whole order being these — to preserve the stores, to guard the treasures, of past civilization, and thus to bind the present with the past; to perfect and add to the same, and thus to connect the present with the future; but especially to diffuse through the whole community, and to every native entitled to its laws and rights, that quantity and quality of knowledge which was indispensable both for the understanding of those rights and for the performance of the duties correspondent. Finally, to secure for the nation, if not a superiority over the neighbouring states, yet an equality at least, in that character of general civilization, which equally with, or rather more than, fleets, armies and revenue, forms the ground of its defensive and offensive power. The object of the two former estates of the realm, which conjointly form the

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STATE, was to reconcile the interests of permanence with that of progression — law with liberty. The object of the National Church, the third remaining estate of the realm, was to secure and improve that civilization without which the nation could be neither permanent nor progressive. . . .

In the spiritual sense of the word, and as understood in reference to a future state, and to the abiding essential interest of the individual as a person, and not as the citizen, neighbour or subject, religion may be an indispensable ally, but is not the essential constitutive end of that national institute which is unfortunately, at least improperly, styled a church — a name which, in its best sense, is exclusively appropriate to the Church of Christ. If this latter be *ecclesia*, the communion of such as are called out of the world, i.e. in reference to the especial ends and purposes of that communion this other might more expressively have been entitled *enclesia*, or an order of men, chosen in and of the realm, and constituting an estate of that realm. And, in fact, such was the original and proper sense of the more appropriately named CLERGY. It comprehended the learned of all names, and the CLERK was the synonym of the man of learning. . . .

THE CLERISY of the nation, or national church, in its primary acceptation and original intention, comprehended the learned of all denominations; — the sages and professors of the law and jurisprudence; of medicine and physiology; of music; of military and civil architecture; of the physical sciences; with the mathematical as the common organ of the preceding; in short, all the so-called liberal arts and sciences, the possession and application of which constitute the civilization of a country, as well as the Theological. The last was, indeed, placed at the head of all; and of good right did it

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claim the precedence. But why? Because under the name of Theology, or Divinity, were contained the interpretation of languages; the conservation and tradition of past events; the momentous epochs and revolutions of the race and nation; the continuation of the records; logic, ethics, and the determination of ethical science, in application to the rights and duties of men in all their various relations, social and civil; and lastly, the ground-knowledge, the *prima scientia* as it was named — PHILOSOPHY, or the doctrine and discipline of *Ideas*.

Theology formed only a part of the objects, the Theologians formed only a portion of the clerks or clergy, of the national church. The theological order had precedence, indeed, and deservedly; but not because its members were priests whose office was to conciliate the invisible powers and to superintend the interests that survive the grave; not as being exclusively, or even principally, sacerdotal or templar . . . No! The Theologians took the lead because the SCIENCE of Theology was the root and trunk of the knowledges that civilized man, because it gave unity and the circulating sap of life to all other sciences, by virtue of which alone they could be contemplated as forming collectively the living tree of knowledge. It had the precedence because under the name theology were comprised all the main aids, instruments, and materials of NATIONAL EDUCATION, the *nisus formativus* of the body politic, the shaping and informing spirit, which, *educing* i.e. eliciting, the latent *man* in all the natives of the soil, *trains them up* to be citizens of the country, free subjects of the realm. And lastly, because to divinity belong those fundamental truths which are the common groundwork of our civil and religious duties, not less indispensable to a right view of our temporal concerns

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than to a rational faith respecting our immortal well-being. (Not without celestial observations can even terrestrial charts be accurately constructed.) And of especial importance is it to the objects here contemplated that, only by the vital warmth diffused by these truths throughout the MANY, and by the guiding light from the philosophy, which is the basis of *divinity*, possessed by the FEW, can either the community or its rulers fully comprehend, or rightly appreciate, the permanent *distinction*, and the occasional *contrast*, between cultivation and civilization; or be made to understand this most valuable of the lessons taught by history, and exemplified alike in her oldest and her most recent records — that a nation can never be a too cultivated, [lxiii] but may easily become an over-civilized race.

(iv) *Functions of the National Church*

The mercantile and commercial class, in which I here comprise all the four classes that I have put in antithesis to the Landed Order, the guardian and depository of the *Permanence* of the Realm, as most characteristically conspiring to the interests of its progression, improvement and general freedom of the country — this class did, as I have already remarked, in the earlier stages of the constitution, exist as but in the bud. But during all this period of potential existence, or what we may call the minority of the burgess order, the National Church was the substitute for the most important national benefits resulting from the same. The National Church presented the breathing-hole of hope. The church alone relaxed the iron fate by which feudal dependency, primogeniture and entail would otherwise have predestined every native of the realm to be lord or vassal. To the church alone could the nation look for the benefits of

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existing knowledge and for the means of future civilization. Lastly, let it never be forgotten that under the fostering wing of the church the class of free citizens and burghers were reared. To the feudal system we owe the *forms*, to the church the *substance*, of our liberty. We mention only two of many facts that would form the proof and comment of the above; first, the origin of towns and cities in the privileges attached to the vicinity of churches and monasteries, and which, preparing an asylum for the fugitive Vassal and oppressed Franklin, thus laid the first foundation of a class of freemen detached from the land. Secondly, the Holy War which the national clergy, in this instance faithful to their national duties, waged against slavery and villeinage, and with such success that in the reign of Charles II the law which declared every native of the realm free by birth had merely to sanction an *opus jam consummatum*. [lxiv]

As a natural consequence of the full development and expansion of the mercantile and commercial order, which in the earlier epochs of the constitution only existed, as it were, potentially and in the bud; the students and possessors of those sorts of learning, the use and necessity of which were indeed constant and perpetual to the *nation*, but only accidental and occasional to *individuals*, gradually detached themselves from the nationality and the national clergy, and passed to the order with the growth and thriving condition of which their emoluments were found to increase in equal proportion. Rather, perhaps, it should be said that under the common name of professional, the learned in the departments of law, medicine, etc., formed an intermediate link between the established clergy and the burgesses.

This circumstance, however, can in no way affect the principle, nor alter the tenure, nor annul the rights of those

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who remained, and who, as members of the permanent learned class, were planted throughout the realm, each in his appointed place, as the immediate agents and instruments in the great and indispensable work of perpetuating, promoting, and increasing the civilization of the nation, and who thus fulfilling the purposes for which the determinate portion of the total wealth from the land had been reserved, are entitled to remain its trustees and usufructuary proprietors. But, remember, I do not assert that the proceeds from the nationality cannot be rightfully vested except in what we now mean by clergymen and the established clergy. I have everywhere implied the contrary. But I do assert that the nationality cannot rightfully be, and that without foul wrong to the nation it never has been, alienated from its original purposes. I assert that those who, being duly elected and appointed thereto, exercise the functions and perform the duties attached to the nationality — that these collectively possess an inalienable, indefeasible title to the same — and this by a *Jure Divinio* to which the thunders from Mount Sinai might give additional authority but not additional evidence.

... During the dark times [*the Middle Ages*] ... large masses were alienated from the heritable properties of the realm and confounded with the Nationalty under the common name of Church Property. Had every rood, every pepper-corn, every stone, brick and beam been re-transferred and made heritable at the Reformation, no right would have been invaded, no principle of justice violated. What the state by law — that is, by the collective will of its functionaries at any one time assembled — can do or suffer to be done; that the state can, by law, undo or inhibit. And in *principle* such bequests and donations were vitious *ab*

in ius, implying in the donor an absolute property in land unknown to the constitution of the realm and in defeasance of that immutable reason which, in the name of the nation and the national majesty, proclaims: — ‘The land is not yours: it was vested in your *lineage* in trust for the nation.’ [lxv]

... The name of Henry VIII would outshine that of Alfred ... had he retained the will and possessed the power of effecting that in part he promised and proposed to do — if he had availed himself of the wealth and landed masses that had been unconstitutionally alienated from the state, i.e. transferred from the scale of heritable lands and revenues, to purchase and win back whatever had been alienated from the opposite scale of the nationality. *Wrongfully* alienated: for it was a possession in which every free subject in the nation has a living interest, a permanent, and likewise a possible personal and reversionary interest! *Sacrilegiously* alienated: for it had been consecrated ... to the potential divinity in every man, which is the ground and condition of his *civil* existence, that without which a man can be neither free nor obliged, and by which alone, therefore, he is capable of being a free subject — a citizen.

If, having thus righted the balance on both sides, HENRY had then directed the nationality to its true national purposes ... [*it would have been*] distributed in proportionate channels to the maintenance:

1. Of universities and the great schools of liberal learning,
2. Of a pastor, presbyter, or *parson* in every parish. ... [lxvi]

That to every parish throughout the kingdom there is transplanted a germ of civilization: that in the remotest villages there is a nucleus round which the capabilities of the place may crystallize and brighten; a model sufficiently superior to excite, yet sufficiently near to encourage and facilitate

imitation; *this* unobtrusive, continuous agency of a Protestant Church Establishment, *this* it is which the patriot and the philanthropist who would fain unite the love of peace with the faith in the progressive amelioration of mankind, cannot estimate at too high a price . . . The clergyman is with his parishioners and among them; he is neither in the cloistered cell nor in the wilderness, but a neighbour and family-man, whose education and rank admit him to the mansion of the rich landholder, while his duties make him [lxvii] the frequent visitor of the farmhouse and the cottage.

3. Of a school-master in every parish, who, in due time and under condition of a faithful performance of his arduous duties, should succeed to the pastorate; so that both should be labourers in different compartments of the same field, workmen engaged in different stages of the same process, with such difference of rank as might be suggested in the names pastor and sub-pastor, or as now exists between curate and rector, deacon and elder. Both alike, I say, members and ministers of the national clerisy or church, working to the same end . . . to form and train up the people of the country to obedient, free, useful, organizable subjects, citizens and patriots, living to the benefit of the state and prepared to die for its defence. The proper *object* and end of the National Church is civilization with freedom; and the duty of its ministers, could they be contemplated merely and exclusively as officaries of the *National* Church, would be fulfilled in the communication of that degree and kind of knowledge to all, the possession of which is necessary for all in order to their CIVILITY. By civility I mean all the qualities essential to a citizen, and devoid of which no people or class of the people can be calculated on by the rulers and leaders of the state for the conservation or promotion of its

essential interests. It follows, therefore, that in regard of the grounds and principles of action and conduct, the State has a right to demand of the National Church that its instructions should be fitted to diffuse throughout the people *legality*, that is, the obligations of a well-calculated self-interest, under the conditions of a common interest determined by common laws.

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4. Of the maintenance of the proper, that is, the infirm poor, whether from age or sickness: one of the original purposes of the national Reserve being the alleviation of those evils which in the best forms of worldly states must arise and must have been foreseen as arising from the institution of individual properties and primogeniture. If these duties were efficiently performed, and these purposes adequately fulfilled, the very increase of the population (which would, however, by these very means have been prevented from becoming a vicious population) would have more than counterbalanced those savings in the expenditure of the nationality occasioned by the detachment of the practitioners of law, medicine, etc., from the national clergy.

That this transfer of the national reserve from what had become national evils to its original and inherent purpose of national benefits, instead of the sacrilegious alienation which actually took place — that this was impracticable, is historically true; but no less true is it philosophically that this impracticability arising wholly from moral causes — that is, from loose manners and corrupt principles — does not rescue this wholesale sacrilege from deserving the character of the first and deadliest wound inflicted on the constitution of the kingdom: which term 'Constitution', in the body politic, as in bodies natural, expresses not only what has been actually evolved, but likewise whatever is poten-

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tially contained in the seminal principle of the particular body, and would in its due time have appeared but for emasculation or disease. . . .

Among the primary ends of the STATE (in that highest sense of the word in which it is equivalent to the nation, considered as one body politic, and therefore includes the National Church) there are two of which the National Church (according to its idea) is the especial and constitutional organ and means. The one is, to secure to the subjects of the realm generally the hope, the chance, of bettering their own or their children's condition. And though during the last three or four centuries the National Church has found a most powerful surrogate and ally for the effectuation of this great purpose in her former wards and foster-children, i.e. in trade, commerce, free industry and the arts — yet still the nationality, under all defalcations, continues to feed the higher ranks by drawing up whatever is worthiest from below, and thus maintains the principle of Hope in the humblest families, while it secures the possessions of the rich and noble. Our Maker has distinguished man from the brute that perishes by making hope first an instinct of his nature; and secondly an indispensable condition of his moral and intellectual progression . . . But a natural instinct constitutes a right, as far as its gratification is compatible with the equal rights of others. And this principle we may expand, and apply to the idea of the National Church . . . This is one of the two ends.

The other is to develop in every native of the country those faculties, and to provide for every native that knowledge and those attainments, which are necessary to qualify him for a member of the state, the free subject of a civilized realm. We do not mean those degrees of moral and intel-

lectual cultivation which distinguish man from man in the same civilized society, much less those that separate the Christian from the this-worldian; but those only that constitute the civilized man in contra-distinction from the [lxx] barbarian, the savage and the animal.

(v) *Conditions of the health of the Body Politic*

The first . . . required in order to a sound constitution of the Body Politic is a due proportion of the free and permeative life and energy of the Nation to the organized powers brought within containing channels. What those vital forces that seem to bear an analogy to the imponderable agents, magnetic or galvanic, in bodies inorganic (if indeed they are not the same in a higher energy and under a different law of action), what these, I say, are in the living body in distinction from the fluids in the glands and vessels — the same, or at least a like relation, do the indeterminable but yet actual influences of intellect, information, prevailing principles and tendencies (to which we must add the influence of property or income where it exists without right of suffrage attached thereto), hold to the regular, definite and legally recognized Powers in the Body Politic. But as no simile runs on all four legs (*nihil simile est idem*), so here the difference in respect of the Body Politic is, that in sundry instances of the former, i.e. the permeative, species of force is capable of being converted into the latter, of being as it were organized and rendered a part of the vascular system by attaching a measured and determinate political right or privilege thereto.

What the exact proportion, however, of the two kinds of force should be it is impossible to pre-determine. But the existence of a disproportion is sure to be detected sooner or

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later by the effects. Thus, the ancient Greek democracies, the *hot-beds* of Art, Science, Genius and Civilization, fell into dissolution from the excess of the former, the permeative power deranging the functions, and by explosions shattering the organic structures they should have enlivened. On the contrary, the Republic of Venice fell by the contrary extremes. All political power was confined to the determinate vessels, and these, becoming more and more rigid, even to an ossification of the arteries, the State, in which the people were nothing, lost all power of resistance *ad extra*:

Under this head, in short, there are three possible sorts of malformation to be noticed, namely — The adjunction or concession of direct political power to *personal* force and influence, whether physical or intellectual, existing in classes or aggregates of individuals without those fixed or tangible possessions, freehold, copyhold or leasehold, in land, house or stock. The power resulting from the acquisition of knowledge or skill, and from the superior development of the understanding is, doubtless, of a far nobler kind than mere physical strength and fierceness, the one being *peculiar* to the animal *Man*, the other common to him with the Bear, the Buffalo and the Mastiff. And if superior talents and the mere possession of knowledges such as can be learnt at Mechanics' Institutions were regularly accompanied with a Will in harmony with the Reason, and a consequent subordination of the appetites and passions to the ultimate ends of our Being: if intellectual gifts and attainments were infallible signs of wisdom and goodness in the same proportion, and the knowing, clever and *talented* (a vile word!) were always *rational*; if the mere facts of science conferred or superseded the softening, humanizing influences of the moral world, that habitual presence of the

beautiful or the seemly, and that exemption from all familiarity with the gross, the mean and the disorderly, whether in look or language or in the surrounding objects, in which the main efficacy of a liberal education exists; and if, lastly, these acquirements and powers of the understanding could be shared equally by the whole class, and did not, as by a necessity of nature they ever must do, fall to the lot of two or three in each several group, club or neighbourhood; — then, indeed, by an enlargement of the Chinese system, political power might not unwisely be conferred as the honorarium or privilege on having passed through all the forms in the National Schools, without the security of political ties, without those fastenings and radical fibres of a collective and registerable property, by which the Citizen inheres in and belongs to the Commonwealth, as a constituent part either of the Proprietary or of the Nationalty; either of the State or of the National Church. But as the contrary of all these suppositions may be more safely assumed, the practical conclusion will be — not that the requisite means of intellectual development and growth should be withheld from any native of the soil, which it was at all times wicked to wish and which it would be now silly to attempt; but — that the gifts of the understanding, whether the boon of a genial nature or the reward of more persistent application, should be allowed fair play in the acquiring of that proprietorship to which a certain portion of political power belongs as its proper function. For, in this way there is at least a strong probability that intellectual power will be armed with political power only where it has previously been combined with and guarded by the moral qualities of prudence, industry and self-control. And this is the first of the three kinds of mal-

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organization in a state: viz. direct political power without cognizable possession.

The second is: the exclusion of any class or numerous body of individuals who have notoriously risen into possession, and the influence inevitably connected with known possession, under pretence of impediments that do not directly or essentially affect the character of the individuals as citizens, or absolutely disqualify them for the performance of civic duties. Imperfect, yet oppressive and irritating ligatures that peril the trunk whose circulating current they would withhold, even more than the limb which they would fain excommunicate!

The third and last is: a gross incorrespondency of the proportion of the antagonist interests of the Body Politic in the representative body — i.e. (in relation to our own country), in the two Houses of Parliament — to the actual proportion of the same interests, and of the public influence exerted by the same in the Nation at large. Whether in consequence of the gradual revolution which has transferred to the Magnates of the Landed Interest so large a proportion of that Borough Representation which was to have been its counter-balance; whether the same causes which have deranged the equilibrium of the Landed and the Monied Interests in the Legislature have not likewise deranged the balance between the two unequal divisions of the Landed Interest itself, viz., the Major Barons, or great Land-owners, with or without title, and the great body of the Agricultural Community, and thus giving to the real or imagined interests of the comparatively few the imposing name of the Interest of the whole — the landed Interest! — these are questions to which the obdurate adherence to the jail-crowding Game Laws (which, during the reading of our

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Church Litany, I have sometimes been tempted to include by a sort of *sub intellige* in the petitions — ‘from envy, hatred and malice, and all uncharitableness; from battle, murder and sudden death, Good Lord deliver us!’), to which the Corn Laws, the exclusion of the produce of our own colonies from our distilleries, etc., during the war, against the earnest recommendation of the government, the retention of the Statutes against Usury, and other points of minor importance or of less safe handling, may seem at a first view to suggest an answer in the affirmative; but which, for reasons before assigned, I shall leave unresolved, content if only I have made the Principle itself intelligible. . . . [lxxi]

So much in explanation of the first of the two Conditions of the health and vigour of a Body Politic . . . The Second Condition is —

A due proportion of the *potential* (latent, dormant) to the *actual* power. In the first condition, both powers are alike awake and in act. The Balance is produced by the *polarization* of the Actual Power, i.e. the opposition of the Actual Power organized, to the Actual Power free and permeating the organs. In the Second, the Actual Power *in toto*, is opposed to the Potential.

It has been frequently and truly observed that in England, where the ground-plan, the skeleton, as it were, of the government is a monarchy at once buttressed and limited by the Aristocracy (the assertions of its popular character finding a better support in the harangues and theories of popular men than in state-documents and the records of clear History), a far greater degree of liberty is, and long has been, enjoyed, than ever existed in the ostensibly freest, that is, most democratic, Commonwealths of ancient or of modern times — greater indeed, and with a more decisive

predominance of the Spirit of Freedom, than the wisest and most philanthropic statesmen of antiquity, or than the great Commonwealth's-men (the stars of that narrow interspace of blue sky between the black clouds of the first and second Charles's reigns), believed compatible, the one with the safety of the State, the other with the interests of Morality. Yes! For little less than a century and a half, Englishmen have collectively and individually lived and acted with fewer restraints on their free-agency than the citizens of any known Republic past or present. The fact is certain. It has been often boasted of, but never, I think, clearly explained. The solution of the phenomenon must, it is obvious, be sought for in the combination of circumstances to which we owe the insular privilege of a self-evolving Constitution: and the following will, I think, be found the main cause of the fact in question.

Extremes meet — an adage of inexhaustible exemplification. A democratic Republic and an Absolute Monarchy agree in this; that in both alike the Nation or People delegates its whole power. Nothing is left obscure, nothing suffered to remain in the Idea, unevolved and only acknowledged as an existing, yet interminable, Right. A Constitution such states can scarcely be said to possess. The whole Will of the Body Politic is in act at every moment. But in the Constitution of England according to the Idea . . . the Nation had delegated its power, not without measure and circumscription, whether in respect of the duration of the [lxxii] Trust, or of the particular interests entrusted.

The Omnipotence of Parliament, in the mouth of a lawyer, and understood exclusively of the restraints and remedies within the competence of our Law-courts, is objectionable only as bombast. It is but a puffing, pompous

way of stating a plain matter of fact . . . But if the strutting phrase be taken, as from sundry recent speeches respecting the fundamental institutions of the realm it may be reasonably inferred that it has been taken, i.e. absolutely, and in reference not to our Courts of Law exclusively but to the Nation, to England with all her venerable heir-looms and with all her germs of reversionary wealth — thus used and understood, the Omnipotence of Parliament is an hyperbole that would contain mischief in it were it only that it tends to provoke a detailed analysis of the materials of the joint-stock company to which so terrific an attribute belongs, and the competence of the shareholders in this earthly omnipotence to exercise the same . . . The degree and sort of knowledge, talent, probity and prescience which, it would be only too easy, were it not too invidious, to prove from acts and measures presented by the history of the last half century, are but *scant measure* . . . this portion of moral and mental endowment, placed by the side of the plusquam-gigantic height and amplitude of power implied in the unqualified use of the phrase ‘Omnipotence of Parliament’, and with its dwarfdom exaggerated by the contrast, would threaten to distort the countenance of truth itself with the sardonic laugh of irony. . . .

[lxxiii]

The principle itself . . . might seem to many fitter matter for verse than for sober argument, I will, by way of compromise, and for the amusement of the reader, sum up in the rhyming prose of an old Puritan Poet . . .

‘Let not your King and Parliament in *one*,
 Much less apart, mistake themselves for that
 Which is most worthy to be thought upon:
 Nor think they are, essentially, the STATE.

.

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‘But let them know, ’twas for a deeper life,
Which they but *represent* —
That there’s on earth a yet auguster Thing,
[lxxiv] Veil’d tho’ it be, than Parliament and King.’

It is only to a limited extent that laws can be wiser
[lxxv] than the nation for which they are enacted.

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(a) THE PRESENT DISCONTENTS (1817)

(i) *An appeal to the higher and middle classes*

Fellow-countrymen! You I mean, who fill the higher and middle stations of society! The comforts, perchance the splendours, that surround you, designate your rank, but cannot constitute your moral and personal fitness for it . . . by what mark shall you stand accredited to your own consciences as its worthy — possessors? . . . The mark in question must be so far common, that we may be entitled to look for it in you from the mere circumstances of your station, and so far distinctive that it must be such as cannot be expected generally from the inferior classes . . . The least that can be demanded of the least favoured among you is an earnest endeavour to walk in the light of your own knowledge; and not, as the mass of mankind, by laying hold on the skirts of custom . . . Your habits of reflection should at least be equal to your opportunities of leisure, and to that which is itself a species of leisure — your immunity from

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bodily labour . . . If you possess more than is necessary for your own wants, more than your own wants ought to be felt by you as your own interests. You are pacing on a smooth terrace which you owe to the happy institutions of your country — a terrace on the mountain's breast. To what purpose, by what moral right, if you continue to gaze only on the sod beneath your feet? [E]

(ii) *England's advantages*

It would furnish grounds both for humility towards Providence and for increased attachment to our country, if each individual could but see and feel how large a part of his innocence he owes to his birth, breeding and residence in Great Britain. The administration of the laws; the almost continual teaching of moral prudence; the pressure of our ranks on each other, with the consequent reserve and watchfulness of demeanour in the superior ranks, and the emulation in the subordinate; the vast depth, expansion and systematic movements of our trade; and the consequent interdependence, the arterial or nerve-like network of property, which make every deviation from outward integrity a calculable loss to the offending individual himself from its mere effects, as obstruction and irregularity; and lastly the naturalness of doing as others do: — these and the like influences, peculiar, some in the kind and all in the degree, to this privileged island, are the buttresses on which our foundationless well-doing is upholden even as a house of cards, the architecture of our infancy, in which each is supported by all. . . .

The splendour of our exploits during the late war is less honourable to us than the magnanimity of our views and our generous confidence in the victory of the better cause.

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Accordingly, we have obtained a good name, so that the nations around us have displayed a disposition to follow our example and imitate our institutions; too often, I fear, even in parts where, from the difference of our relative circumstances, the imitation had little chance of proving more than mimicry. But it will be far more glorious, and to our neighbours incomparably more instructive, if in distresses to which all countries are liable, we bestir ourselves on remedial and preventive arrangements which all nations may more or less adopt; inasmuch as they are grounded on principles intelligible to all rational, and obligatory on all moral, beings; inasmuch as, having been taught by God's word, exemplified by God's providence, commanded by God's law, and recommended by promises of God's grace, they [ii] alone can form the foundation of a Christian community. . . .

(iii) *Immediate occasion of the discontents*

The ultimate causes of the present distress and stagnation are in my opinion complex and deeply seated; but the immediate occasion is too obvious to be over-looked but by eyes at once red and dim through the intoxication of factious prejudice. . . .

It is demonstrable that taxes, the product of which is circulated in the country from which they are raised, can never injure a country by the mere amount; but either from the time or circumstances under which they are raised, or from the injudicious mode in which they are levied, or from [iii] the improper objects to which they are applied . . . For taxation is itself a part of commerce, and the government may be fairly considered as a great manufacturing house, carrying on in different places, by means of its partners and overseers, the trades of the ship-builder, the clothier, the

iron-founder, and the like. As long as the balance is preserved between the receipts and the returns of Government in their amount, quickness and degree of dispersion; as long as the due proportion obtains in the sums levied to the mass in productive circulation, so long does the wealth and circumstantial prosperity of the nation (its wealth, I say, not its real welfare; its outward prosperity, but not necessarily its happiness) — remain unaffected, or rather they will appear to increase in consequence of the additional *stimulus* given to the circulation itself by the reproductive action of all large capitals, and through the check which taxation in its own nature gives to the indolence of the wealthy in its continual transfer of property to the industrious and enterprising. It was one among the many anomalies of the late [iv] war that it acted, after a few years, as a universal stimulant. We almost monopolized the commerce of the world. The high wages of our artisans and the high prices of agricultural produce intercirculated. Leases of unusual length not seldom enabled the provident and thrifty farmer to purchase the estate he had rented. Everywhere might be seen roads, railways, docks, canals, made, making and projected; villages swelling into towns, while the metropolis surrounded itself, and became (as it were) set with new cities. Finally, in spite of all the waste and havoc of a twenty years' war, the population of the empire was increased by more than two millions. The efforts and war expenditure of the nation, and the yearly revenue, were augmented in the same proportion: and to all this we must add a fact of the utmost importance in the present question, that the war did not, as was usually the case, die away into a long-expected peace by gradual exhaustion and weariness on both sides, but plunged to its conclusion by a concentration, we might

almost say, by a spasm of energy, and consequently by an anticipation of our resources. We conquered by compelling reversionary power into alliance with our existing and natural strength. The first intoxication of triumph having passed over, this our agony of glory was succeeded of course by a general stiffness and relaxation. The antagonist passions came into play; financial solicitude was blended with constitutional and political jealousies, and both alas! were exacerbated by personal imprudences, the chief injury of which consisted in their own tendency to disgust and alienate the public feeling. And with all this, the financial errors and prejudices even of the more educated classes, in short, the general want or imperfection of clear views and a scientific insight into the true effects and influences of taxation and the mode of its operation, became now a real misfortune, and opened an additional source of temporary embarrassment. Retrenchment could no longer proceed by cautious and calculated steps; but was compelled to hurry forward, like one who crossing the sands at too late an hour finds himself threatened by the inrush of the tide. Nevertheless, it was a truth susceptible of little less than mathematical demonstration, that the more, and the more suddenly, the revenue was diminished by the abandonment of the war-taxes, the greater would be the disturbance of the balance: so that the agriculturist, the manufacturer or the tradesman — (all, in short, but annuitants and fixed stipendiaries) — who during the war having paid as five had fifteen left behind, would shortly have less than ten after having paid but two and a half. What then the pressure on the country must be, when we add to the above the return to cash payments, without any change made in the intrinsic value of the coin, and so as in effect to re-impose the

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amount of taxes nominally remitted, may be easily understood.

But there is yet another circumstance which I must not pass by unnoticed. In the best of times — or what the world calls such — the spirit of commerce will occasion great fluctuations, some falling while others rise, and therefore in all times there will be a large sum of individual distress. Trades likewise have their seasons, consequently even in the most flourishing period there will be a very considerable number of artificers who are not employed on the average more than seven or eight months in the year; and the distress from this cause is great or small in proportion to the greater or lesser degree of dissipation and improvidence prevailing among them. But besides this, that artificial life and vigour of trade and agriculture which was produced or occasioned by the direct or indirect influences of the late war, proved by no means innoxious in its effects. Habit, and the familiarity with outward advantages, which takes off their dazzle; sense of character; and, above all, the counterpoise of intellectual pursuits and resources; are all necessary preventives and antidotes to the dangerous properties of wealth and power with the great majority of mankind. It is a painful subject: and I leave to your own experience and recollection the assemblage of folly, presumption and extravagance, that followed in the procession of our late unprecedented prosperity; and the blind practices and blending passions of speculation in the commercial world, with the shoal of ostentatious fooleries and sensual vices which the sudden influx of wealth let in on our farmers and yeomanry. . . .

Within the last sixty years or perhaps a somewhat larger period . . . there have occurred at intervals of about twelve

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or thirteen years each, certain periodical revolutions of credit. Yet revolution is not the precise word. To state the thing as it is, I ought to have said, certain gradual expansions of credit ending in sudden contractions, or, with equal propriety, ascensions to a certain utmost possible height, which has been different in each successive instance; but in every instance the attainment of this its *ne plus ultra* has been instantly announced by a rapid series of explosions (in mercantile language, a crash) and a consequent precipitation of the general system . . . I am not ignorant that the power and circumstantial prosperity of the nation has been increasing during the same period with an accelerated force unprecedented in any country the population of which bears the same proportion to its productive soil; and partly, perhaps, even in consequence of this system. By facilitating the means of enterprise, it must have called into activity a multitude of enterprising individuals and a variety of talent that would otherwise have lain dormant: while by the same ready supply of excitements to labour, together with its materials and instruments, even an unsound credit has been able within a short time to substantiate itself. I shall perhaps be told, too, that the very evils of this system, even the periodical crash itself, are to be regarded but as so much superfluous steam ejected by the escape-pipes and safety-valves of a self-regulating machine: and lastly that in a free and trading country all things find their level. . . .

Much I still concede to the arguments for the present scheme of things as adduced in the preceding paragraph: but I likewise see, and always have seen, much that needs winnowing. Thus, instead of the position that all things find, it would be less equivocal and far more descriptive of the fact to say that things are always finding,

their level: which might be taken as the paraphrase or ironical definition of a storm. But persons are not things — but man does not find his level. Neither in body nor in soul does the man find his level. After a hard and calamitous season, during which the thousand wheels of some vast manufactory had remained silent as a frozen waterfall, be it that plenty has returned and that trade has once more become brisk and stirring: go, ask the overseer, and question the parish doctor, whether the workman's health and temperance with the staid and respectful manners best taught by the inward dignity of conscious self-support, have found their level again? Alas! I have more than once seen a group of children in Dorsetshire, during the heat of the dog-days, each with its little shoulders up to its ears, and its chest pinched inward, the very habit and fixtures, as it were, that had been impressed on their frames by the former ill-fed, ill-clothed and unfuelled winters. But as with the body, so or still worse with the mind. Nor is the effect confined to the labouring classes, whom, by an ominous but too appropriate change in our phraseology, we are now accustomed to call the labouring poor. I cannot persuade myself that the frequency of failures, with all the disgraceful secrets of fraud and folly, of unprincipled vanity in expending and desperate speculation in retrieving, can be familiarized to the thoughts and experience of men as matters of daily occurrence without serious injury to the moral sense . . . Name to me any revolution recorded in history that was not followed by a depravation of the national morals. The Roman character under the Triumvirate and under Tiberius; the reign of Charles II, and Paris at the present moment (1817) — are obvious instances. What is the main cause? The sense of insecurity. On what ground, then, may we

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hope that with the same accompaniment, commercial revolutions should not produce the same effect, in proportion to the extent of their sphere?

But these blessings. . . ? Dare we unpack the bales and cases so marked and look at the articles, one by one? Increase of human life and increase of the means of life are, it is true, reciprocally cause and effect: and the genius of commerce and manufacture has been the cause of both to a degree that may well excite our wonder. But do the last results justify our expectations likewise? Human life, alas! is but the malleable metal out of which the thievish pick-lock, the slave's collar and the assassin's *stiletto* are formed as well as the clearing axe, the feeding ploughshare, the defensive sword and the mechanic tool. But the subject is a painful one: and fortunately the labour of others, with the communications of medical men concerning the state of the manufacturing poor, have rendered it unnecessary. I will rather . . . relate a speech made to me near Fort Augustus, as I was travelling on foot through the Highlands of Scotland. The speaker was an elderly and respectable widow . . . After an affecting account of her own wrongs and ejection . . . she made a movement with her hand in a circle, directing my eye meanwhile to various objects as marking its outline; and then observed with a deep sigh and a suppressed and slow voice which she suddenly raised and quickened after the first drop or cadence: 'Within this space — how short a time back — there lived a hundred and seventy-three persons: and now there is only one shepherd and an underling or two . . . Instead of us all, there is one shepherd man, and it may be a pair of small lads — and many, many sheep! And do you think, Sir! that God allows of such proceedings?'

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Some days before this conversation, and while I was on the shores of Loch Katrine, I had heard of a sad counterpart to the widow's tale, and told with a far fiercer indignation, of a 'Laird who had raised a company from the country round about, for the love that was borne to his name, and who gained high preferment in consequence: and that it was but a small part of those that he took away whom he brought back again. And what were the thanks which the folks had, both for those that had come back with him, some blind, and more in danger of blindness; and for those that had perished in the hospitals, and for those that fell in battle . . . Why, that their fathers were all turned out of their farms before the year was over, and sent to wander like so many gipsies, unless they would consent to shed their grey hairs at ten-pence a day over the new canals. Had there been a price set upon his head, and his enemies had been coming upon him, he needed but have whistled, and a hundred brave lads would have made a wall of flame round about him with the flash of their broadswords! Now if the French should come among us, as (it is said) they will, let him whistle to his sheep and see if they will fight for him!' The frequency with which I heard . . . confident expectations of the kind expressed in his concluding words — nay, far too often eager hopes mingled with vindictive resolves — I spoke of with complaint and regret to an elderly man, whom by his dress and way of speaking I took to be a schoolmaster. Long shall I recollect his reply: 'O Sir, it kills a man's love for his country, the hardships of life coming by change and with injustice!' I was sometime afterwards told by a very sensible person who had studied the mysteries of political economy, and was therefore entitled to be listened to, 'that more food was produced in

consequence of this revolution, that the mutton must be eaten somewhere, and what difference where? If three were fed at Manchester instead of two at Glencoe or the Trossachs, the balance of human enjoyment was in favour of the former'. I have passed through many a manufacturing town since then, and have watched many a group of old and young, male and female, going to, or returning from, many a factory, but I could never yet persuade myself to be of his opinion. Men, I still think, ought to be weighed, not counted. Their worth ought to be the final estimate of their value. . . .

Retrace the progress of things from 1792 to 1813, when the tide was at its height, and then as far as its rapidity will permit, the ebb from its first turn to the dead low-water mark of the last quarter. Then see whether the remainder may not be generalized under the following heads. Fluctuation in the wages of labour, alternate privation and excess (not in all at the same time, but successively in each), consequent improvidence, and over all, discontent and a system of factious confederacy: these form the history of the mechanics and lower ranks of our cities and towns. In the country, a peasantry sinking into pauperism, step for step with the rise of the farmer's profits and indulgencies. On the side of the landlord and his compeers we shall find the presence of the same causes attested by answerable effects. Great as their almost magical effects were on the increase of prices in the necessaries of life, they were still greater, disproportionately greater, in all articles of show and luxury. With few exceptions, it soon became difficult and at length impracticable, for the gentry of the land for the possessors of fixed property, to retain the rank of their ancestors, or their own former establishments, without joining in the general com-

petition under the influence of the same trading spirit. . . .

We see in every promiscuous public meeting the effect produced by the bold assertion that the present hardships of all classes are owing to the number and amount of pensions and sinecures. Yet from the unprecedented zeal and activity in the education of the poor, of the thousands that are inflamed by, and therefore give credit to, these statements, there are few without a child at home who could not prove their impossibility by the first and simplest rules of arithmetic; there is not one, perhaps, who, taken by himself and in a cooler mood, would stand out against the simple question — whether it was not folly to suppose that the lowness of his wages or his want of employment could be occasioned by the circumstance that a sum (the whole of which, as far as it is raised by taxation, cannot take a yearly penny from him) was returned and dispersed into the general circulation by annuitants of the Treasury instead of annuitants of the Bank, by John instead of Peter; however blameable the regulation might be in other respects? What then? The *hypothesis* allows a continual reference to persons, and to all the uneasy and malignant passions which personalities are of all means the best fitted to awaken. The grief itself, however grinding it may be, is of no avail to this end; it must first be converted into a grievance. Were the audience composed chiefly of the lower farmers and the peasantry, the same circumstance would for the same reason have been attributed wholly to the clergy and the system of tithes; as if the corn would be more plentiful if the farmers paid their whole rent to one man, instead of paying nine parts to the landlord and the tenth to the tithe-owner! But let the meeting be composed of the manufacturing poor, and then it is the machinery of their employers

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that is devoted to destruction: though it would not exceed the truth if I affirmed that to the use and perfection of this very machinery the majority of the poor deluded destroyers owe their very existence, owe to it that they ever beheld the light of heaven!

Even so it is with the capitalists and store-keepers, who, by spreading the dearness of provisions over a larger space and time, prevent scarcity from becoming real famine, the frightful lot at certain and not distant intervals of our less commercial forefathers. These men, by the mere instinct of self-interest, are not alone birds of warning that prevent waste; but, as the raven of Elijah, they bring supplies from afar. . . .

(iv) *Ultimate causes of the discontents*

The immediate occasions of the existing distress may be correctly given with no greater difficulty than would attend any other series of known historic facts; but towards the discovery of its true seat and sources I can offer but a humble contribution. They appear to me, however, resolvable into the *overbalance of the commercial spirit in consequence of the absence or weakness of the counter-weights*: this overbalance considered as displaying itself — 1, in the commercial world itself; 2, in the agricultural; 3, in the Government; and 4, in the combined influence of all three on the more numerous and labouring classes.

I entreat attention to the word 'overbalance'. My opinions would be greatly misinterpreted if I were supposed to think hostilely of the spirit of commerce, to which I attribute the largest proportion of our actual freedom, and at least as large a share of our virtues as of our vices. Still more anxiously would I guard against the suspicion of a

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design to inculcate any member or class of individuals. It is not in the power of a minister or a cabinet to say to the current of national tendency: 'Stay here!' or 'Flow there!' The excess can only be remedied by the slow progress of intellect, the influences of religion, the irresistible events guided by Providence. In the points even which I have presumed to blame, by the word Government I intend all the directors of political power, that is, the great estates of the realm, temporal and spiritual, and not only the Parliament, but all the elements of Parliament.

Of the natural counter-forces to the *impetus* of trade, the first that presents itself to the mind is the ancient feeling of rank and ancestry, compared with our present self-complacent triumph over these supposed prejudices. Not that titles and the rights of precedence are pursued by us with less eagerness than they were pursued by our forefathers. The contrary is the case; and for this very cause, because they inspire less reverence. In the olden times they were valued by the possessors and revered by the people as distinctions of nature, which the Crown itself could only ornament, but not give. Like the stars in heaven, their influence was wider and more general because, for the mass of mankind, there was no hope of reaching, and therefore no desire to appropriate, them. That many evils as well as advantages accompanied this state of things I am well aware: and likewise that many of the latter have become incompatible with far more important blessings. It would therefore be sickly affectation to suspend the thankfulness due for our immunity from the one in an idle regret for the loss of the other. But however true this may be, and whether the good or the evil preponderated, still, this reverence for ancientry in families acted as a counterpoise to the grosser

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superstitions of wealth. Of the efficiency of this counterpoise I can offer negative proof only: and for this we need only look back on the deplorable state of Holland in respect of patriotism and public spirit at and before the commencement of the French Revolution.

Under this head I include the general neglect of all the maturer studies: the long and ominous eclipse of philosophy; the usurpation of that venerable name by physical and psychological empiricism; and the non-existence of a learned and philosophic public, which is perhaps the only innoxious form of an *imperium in imperio*, but at the same time the only form which is not directly or indirectly encouraged. . . . I must not permit myself to say more on this subject, desirous as I am of showing the importance of a philosophic class, and of evincing that it is of vital utility, and even an essential element, in the composition of a civilized community. It must suffice that it has been explained in what respect the pursuit of truth for its own sake, and the reverence yielded to its professors, has a tendency to calm or to counteract the pursuit of wealth; and that therefore a counterforce is wanting wherever philosophy is degraded in the estimation of society. . . .

There is a third influence, alternatively our spur and our curb, without which all the pursuits and desires of men must either exceed or fall short of their just measure. Need I add that I mean the influence of religion? I speak of that sincere, that entire, interest in the undivided faith of Christ which demands the firstfruits of the whole man, his affections no less than his outward acts, his understanding equally with his feelings . . . In the present day we hear much, and from men of various creeds, of the plainness and simplicity of the Christian religion: and a strange abuse has

been made of these words, often indeed with no ill intention, but still oftener by men who would fain transform the necessity of believing in Christ into a recommendation to believe in him . . . Religion and politics, they tell us, require but the application of common sense, which every man possesses, to a subject in which every man is concerned . . . To abstain from acts of wrong and violence, to be moreover industrious, useful, and of seemly bearing, are qualities pre-supposed in the Gospel code as the preliminary conditions, rather than the proper and peculiar effects of Christianity. But they are likewise qualities so palpably indispensable to the temporal interests of mankind that, if we except the brief frenzies of revolutionary riot, there never was a time in which the world did not profess to reverence them: nor can we state any period in which a more than ordinary character for assiduity, regularity and charitableness did not secure the world's praise and favour, and were not calculated to advance the individual's own worldly interests: provided only that his manners and professed tenets were those of some known and allowed body of men.

I ask then, what is the fact? We are — and, till its good purposes, which are many, have been all achieved, and we can become something better, long may we continue such! — a busy, enterprising and commercial nation. The habits attached to this character must, if there exist no adequate counterpoise, inevitably lead us under the specious names of utility, practical knowledge and so forth, to look at all things through the *medium* of the market and to estimate the worth of all pursuits and attainments by their marketable value. In this does the spirit of trade consist. Now, would this general experience bear us out in the assertion that amid the

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absence or declension of all other antagonist forces, there is found in the very circle of the trading and opulent themselves, in the increase, namely, of religious professors among them, a spirit of resistance to the excess of the commercial *impetus*, from the impressive example of their unworthy feelings evidenced by their moderation in worldly pursuits? I fear that we may anticipate the answer wherever the religious zeal of such professors does not likewise manifest itself by the glad devotion of as large a portion of their time and industry, as the duty of providing a fair competence for themselves and their families leaves at their own disposal, to the comprehension of those inspired writings and the evolution of those pregnant truths which are proposed for our earnest and sedulous research in order that by occupying our understandings they may more and more assimilate our affections. I fear that the inquiring traveller would more often hear of zealous religionists who have read (and as a duty, too, and with all due acquiescence) the prophetic: '*Woe to them that join house to house and lay field to field, that they may be alone in the land!*' — and yet find no object deform the beauty of the prospect from their window or even from their castle turrets so annoyingly, as a meadow not their own, or a field under ploughing with the beam-end of the plough in the hands of its humble owner! I fear that he must too often make report of men lawful in their dealings, Scriptural in their language, almsgivers, and patrons of Sunday Schools, who are yet resistless and overawing bidders at all land auctions in their neighbourhood, who live in the centre of farms without leases and tenants without attachments! Or, if his way should lie through our great towns and manufacturing districts, instances would grow cheap with him of wealthy religious

practitioners who never travel for orders without cards of edification in prose and verse, and small tracts of admonition and instruction, all 'plain and easy, and suited to the meanest capacities'; who pray daily as the first act of the morning and the last of the evening: *Lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil!* and employ all the interval with an edge of appetite keen as the scythe of death in the pursuit of yet more and yet more of a temptation so perilous, that (as they have full often read, and heard read without the least questioning or whisper of doubt) no power short of omnipotence could make their deliverance from it credible or conceivable.

Of all denominations of Christians, there is not one in existence or on record whose whole system of faith and worship was so expressly framed for the one purpose of spiritualizing the mind and of abstracting it from the vanities of the world, as the Society of Friends . . . If the occasion permitted, I could dilate with pleasure on their decent manners and decorous morals, as individuals, and their exemplary and truly illustrious philanthropic efforts as a Society. From all the gay and tinsel vanities of the world their discipline has preserved them, and the English character owes to their example some part of its manly plainness in externals. But my argument is confined to the question whether religion in its present state and under the present conceptions of its demands and purposes, does, even among the most religious, exert any sufficient control over the commercial spirit, the excess of which we have attributed not to the extent and magnitude of the commerce itself, but to the absence or imperfection of its appointed checks and counter-agents. Now, as the system of the Friends in its first intention is of all others most hostile

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to worldly-mindedness on the one hand; and as, on the other, the adherents of this system both in confession and practice confine Christianity to feelings and motives; they may be selected as representatives of the strict, but un-studied and uninquiring, religionists of every denomination. Their characteristic propensities will supply, therefore, no unfair test for the degree of resistance which our present Christianity is capable of opposing to the cupidity of a trading people. That species of Christianity, I mean, which, as far as knowledge and the faculties of thought are concerned, — which as far as the growth and grandeur of the intellectual man is in question, — is to be learnt *extempore*. A Christianity poured in on the *catechumen* all and all at once, as from a shower-bath; and which, whatever it may be in the heart, yet for the understanding and the reason, is from boyhood onward a thing past and perfected. If the almost universal opinion be tolerably correct, the question is answered. . . .

Thus, then, of the three most approved antagonists to the spirit of barter, and the accompanying disposition to over-value riches with all the means and tokens thereof — of the three fittest and most likely checks to this tendency, namely, the feeling of ancient birth and the respect paid to it by the community at large; a genuine intellectual philosophy with an accredited, learned and philosophic class; and lastly religion; we have found the first declining, the second not existing, and the third efficient indeed in many respects and to many excellent purposes, only not in this particular direction: the religion here spoken of having long since parted company with that inquisitive and bookish theology which tends to defraud the student of his worldly wisdom, inasmuch as it diverts his mind from the accumulation of

wealth by pre-occupying his thoughts in the acquisition of knowledge. For the religion of best repute among us holds all the truths of Scripture and all the doctrines of Christianity so very transcendent, or so very easy, as to make study or research either vain or needless. It professes, therefore, to hunger and thirst after righteousness alone, and the rewards of the righteous; and thus, habitually taking for granted all truths of spiritual import, leaves the understanding vacant and at leisure for a thorough insight into present and temporal interests: which, doubtless, is the true reason why its followers are in general such shrewd, knowing, wary, well-informed, thrifty and thriving men of business. But this is likewise the reason why it neither does nor can check or circumscribe the spirit of barter; and to the consequent monopoly which this commercial spirit possesses must its over-balance be attributed, not the extent or magnitude of the commerce itself. . . .

How, it will be objected, does all this apply to the present times in particular? When was the industrious part of mankind not attached to the pursuits most like to reward their industry? Was the wish to make a fortune, or, if you prefer an invidious phrase, the lust of lucre, less natural to our forefathers than to their descendants? If you say that though a not less frequent, nor less powerful passion with them than with us, it yet met with a more frequent and more powerful check, a stronger and more advanced boundary-line in the religion of old times, and in the faith, fashion, habits, and authority of the religious: in what did this difference consist? and in what way did these points of difference act? If indeed the antidote in question once possessed virtues which it no longer possesses, or not in the same degree, what is the ingredient, either added, omitted,

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or diminished, since that time, which can have rendered it less efficacious now than then? . . .

. . . It might . . . be a sufficient answer to this objection, that as the commerce of the country, and with it the spirit of commerce, has increased fifty-fold since the commencement of the latter period, it is not enough that the counterweight should be as great as it was in the former period: to remain the same in its effect, it ought to have become very much greater . . . [*And*] in order to produce a similar effect it must act in a similar way: it must reign in the thoughts of a man and in the powers akin to thought, as well as exercise an admitted influence over his hopes and fears, and through these on his deliberate and individual acts . . . It is my full conviction that in any half dozen sermons of Donne or Taylor, there are more thoughts, more facts and images, more excitements to inquiry and intellectual effort, than are presented to the congregations of the present day in as many churches or meetings during twice as many months . . . The very length of the discourses with which these rich souls of wit and knowledge fixed the eyes, ears and hearts of their crowded congregations, are a source of wonder nowadays, and we may add, of self-congratulation, to many a sober Christian who forgets with what delight he himself has listened to a two hours' harangue on a loan or a tax. . . .

The last point to which I shall appeal is the warmth and frequency of the religious controversies during the former of the two periods . . . The fact is introduced, not for its own sake, but as a symptom of the general state of men's feelings and as evidence of the direction and main channel in which the thoughts and interests of men were then flowing . . . I shall believe our present religious toleration to proceed from the abundance of our charity and good

sense when I can see proofs that we are equally cool and forbearing as litigators and political partisans. And I must again entreat my reader to recollect that the present argument is exclusively concerned with the requisite correctives of the commercial spirit, and with religion therefore no otherwise than as a counter-charm to the sorcery of wealth: and my main position is that neither by reasons drawn from the nature of the human mind nor by facts of actual experience are we justified in expecting this from a religion which does not employ and actuate the understandings of men, and combine their affections with it as a system of truth gradually and progressively manifesting itself to the intellect; no less than as a system of motives and moral commands learnt as soon as heard, and containing nothing but what is plain and easy to the lowest capacities. . . .

[*It has become difficult*] and at length impracticable for the gentry of the land, for the possessors of fixed property, to retain the rank of their ancestors, or their own former establishments, without joining in the general competition under the influence of the same trading spirit . . . That agriculture requires principles essentially different from those of trade; that a gentleman ought not to regard his estate as a merchant his cargo or a shop-keeper his stock — admits of an easy proof from the different tenure of landed property, and from the purposes of agriculture itself, which ultimately are the same as those of the State of which it is the offspring . . . As the specific ends of agriculture are the maintenance, strength and security of the State, so (I repeat) must its ultimate ends be the same as those of the State: even as the ultimate end of the spring and wheels of a watch must be the same as that of a watch. . . .

It would border on an affront to the understandings of

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the members of our Landed Interest were I to explain in detail what the plan and conduct of a gentleman would be; if, as the result of his own free conviction the marketable produce of his estates were made a subordinate consideration to the living and moral growth that is to remain on the land — I mean a healthful, callous-handed but high-and-warm-hearted tenantry, twice the number of the present landless, parish-paid labourers, and ready to march off at the first call of their country with a Son of the House at their head, because under no apprehension of being (forgive the lowness of the expression) marched off at the whisper of a land-taster: — if the admitted rule, the paramount self-commandment, were comprised in the fixed resolve — I will improve my estate to the utmost; and my rent-roll I will raise as much as, but no more than, is compatible with the three great ends (before enumerated) which, being those of my country, must be mine inclusively: this, I repeat, it would be more than superfluous to particularize. It is a problem the solution of which may be safely entrusted to the common sense of everyone who has the hardihood to ask himself the question. But how encouraging even the approximations to such a system, of what fair promise the few fragmentary samples are, may be seen in the Report of the Board of Agriculture for 1816, p. 11, from the Earl of Winchelsea's communication, in every paragraph of which wisdom seems to address us in behalf of goodness.

But the plan of my argument requires the reverse of this picture. I am to ask what the results would be on the supposition that agriculture is carried on in the spirit of trade; and if the necessary answer coincide with the known general practice, to show the connection of the consequences with the present state of distress and uneasiness. In trade,

from its most innocent form to the abomination of the African commerce nominally abolished after a hard-fought battle of twenty years, no distinction is or can be acknowledged between things and persons. If the latter are part of the concern they come under the domination of the former. Two objects only can be proposed in the management of an estate considered as stock in trade — first, that the returns shall be the largest, quickest and securest possible; and secondly, with the least outgoings in the providing, over-looking and collecting the same . . . Am I disposing of a bale of goods? . . . The personal worth of those whom I benefit in the course of the process, or whether the persons are really benefited or no, is no concern of mine. The market and the shop are open to all. To introduce any other principle into trade but that of obtaining the highest price with adequate security for articles fairly described would be tantamount to the position that trade ought not to exist.

If this be admitted, then what as a tradesman I cannot do, it cannot be my duty as a tradesman to attempt and the only remaining question in reason or morality is — what are the proper objects of trade? If my estate be such, my plan must be to make the most of it, as I would of any other mode of capital. As my rents will ultimately depend on the quantity and value of the produce raised and brought into the best market from my land, I will entrust the latter to those who, bidding the most, have the largest capital to employ on it: and this I cannot effect but by dividing it into the fewest tenures, as none but extensive farms will be an object to men of extensive capital and enterprising minds. I must prefer this system likewise for my own ease and security. The farmer is of course actuated by the same

motives as the landlord: and, provided they are both faithful to their engagements, the objects of both will be: 1, the utmost produce that can be raised without injuring the estate; 2, the least possible consumption of the produce on the estate itself; 3, at the lowest wages; and 4, with the substitution of machinery for human labour wherever the former will cost less and do the same work. . . .

In the only plausible work that I have seen in favour of our Poor Laws on the present plan, the defence is grounded: first on the expediency of having labour cheap, and estates let out in the fewest possible portions — in other words, large farms and low wages — each as indispensable to the other, and both conjointly as the only means of drawing capital to the land. Again, by means of large capitals alone is the largest surplus attainable for the State; that is, for the market, or in order that the smallest possible proportion of the largest possible produce may be consumed by the raisers and their families; secondly, on the impossibility of supplying, as we have supplied, all the countries of the civilized world (India, perhaps, and China, excepted), and of underselling them even in their own market, if our working manufacturers were not secured by the State against the worst consequences of those failures, stagnations and transfers, to which the different branches of trade are exposed, in a greater or less degree, beyond all human prevention; or if the master manufacturers were compelled to give previous security for the maintenance of those whom they had, by the known law of human increase, called into existence.

Let me not be misunderstood. I do not myself admit this impossibility. I have already denied, and I now repeat the denial, that these are necessary consequences of our

extended commerce. On the contrary, I feel assured that the spirit of commerce is itself capable of being at once counter-acted and enlightened by the spirit of the State, to the advantage of both. But I do assert that they are necessary consequences of the commercial spirit un-counter-acted and un-enlightened, wherever trade has been carried on to so vast an extent as it has been in England. I assert, too, that historically and as a matter of fact, they have been the consequences of our commercial system. . . .

But I have shown that the same system has gradually taken possession of our agriculture . . . What have been the results? . . . I find in the agricultural reports that the county in which I read of nothing but farms of 1000, 1500, 2000 and 2500 acres is likewise that in which the poor-rates are most numerous, the distresses of the poor most grievous, and the prevalence of revolutionary principles most alarming. But if we consider the subject on the largest scale and nationally, the consequences are that the most important rounds in the social ladder are broken, and the hope which above all other things distinguishes the free man from the slave is extinguished. The peasantry, therefore, are eager to have their children add as early as possible to their miserable pittance by letting them out to manufactories; while the youths take every opportunity of escaping to towns and cities. And if I were questioned as to my opinion respecting the ultimate cause of our liability to distresses like the present, the cause of what has been called a vicious (that is excessive) population, with all the furies that follow in its train — in short of a state of things so remote from the simplicity of nature that we have almost deprived Heaven itself of the power of blessing us: a state in which without absurdity, a superabundant harvest can be complained of

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as an evil, and the recurrence of the same a ruinous calamity, — I should not hesitate to answer — ‘the vast and disproportionate number of men who are to be fed from the produce of the fields on which they do not labour’.

What then is the remedy; — who are the physicians? The reply may be anticipated. An evil which has come upon us gradually, and in the growth of which all men have more or less conspired, cannot be removed otherwise than gradually and by the joint efforts of all. If we are a Christian nation, we must learn to act nationally, as well as individually, as Christians. We must remove half-truths, the most dangerous of errors (as those of the poor visionaries called Spenceans) by the whole truth. The Government is employed already in retrenchments: but he who expects immediate relief from them, or who does not even know that if they do anything at all, they must for the time tend to aggravate the distress, cannot have studied the operation of public expenditure.

I am persuaded that more good would be done, not only ultimate and permanent, but immediate, good, by the abolition of the lotteries accompanied by a public and Parliamentary declaration of the moral and religious grounds that had determined the Legislature to this act; of their humble confidence of the blessing of God on the measure; and of their hopes that this sacrifice to principle, as being more exemplary from the present pressure on the revenue of the State, would be the more effective in restoring confidence between man and man; — I am deeply convinced that more sterling and visible benefits would be derived from this one solemn proof and pledge of moral fortitude and national faith than from retrenchments to a tenfold greater amount. . . .

Our manufacturers must consent to regulations: our gentry must concern themselves in the education as well as in the instruction of their natural clients and dependents, must regard their estates as secured indeed from all human interference by every principle of law and policy; but yet as offices of trust, with duties to be performed in the sight of God and their country. Let us become a better people, and the reform of all the public (real or supposed) grievances which we use as pegs whereon to hang our own errors and defects, will follow of itself. In short, let every man measure his efforts by his power and his sphere of action, and do all he can do. Let him contribute money where he cannot act personally: but let him act personally and in detail wherever it is practicable. Let us palliate where we cannot cure, comfort where we cannot relieve: and for the rest rely upon the promise of the King of Kings by the mouth of his Prophet: *Blessed are ye that sow beside all waters.* [v]

(b) A LETTER TO LORD LIVERPOOL 1817

[In 1817, the darkest year of England's post-war sufferings, when the country seemed on the verge of revolution, Lord Liverpool, the Prime Minister, received many letters of admonition and advice from anxious and loyal citizens. In March, the Poet Laureate, Robert Southey, wrote to predict a bellum servile: he recommended the curbing of the Press and the assurance of the loyalty of the Army and Navy. 'Is it too late to give them a medal for Algiers, and even for Trafalgar?' he asked. 'No man who wears one will ever be found in a mob against the Government.' Coleridge, on the other hand, writing in July, attributed the present discontents to the prevalence of a

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false philosophy. Lord Liverpool endorsed Coleridge's letter: 'From Mr Coleridge, stating that the object of his writings has been to rescue speculative philosophy from false principles of reasoning, and to place it on that basis, or give it that tendency, which would make it best suited to the interests of religion as well as of the State; at least, I believe this is Mr Coleridge's meaning but I cannot well understand him.'

The letter is printed in full in Yonge's Life of Lord Liverpool, vol. II, pp. 300-7. Our excerpts contain the less obscure passages. The whole document is perhaps the best possible example of Coleridge's belief in the inseparable connections of philosophy, religion, science and politics; of his conviction that contemporary problems should be studied sub specie aeternitas; of the one-ness of his thought. Therefore it has seemed best to reprint it (with short omissions) as it stands, rather than to relegate its sections to those headings of this book under which they would most appropriately lie.]

My only incurable heresy, if such it be, respects that meretricious philosophy which was first taken into open keeping by the courtiers of our second Charles; then, shifting sides with its factious patron, the Earl of Shaftesbury, and having been drilled and dressed up into matronly decorum by Mr. Locke, was led to the altar and honourably espoused to Low Church Protestantism: his former good old handmaid having been repudiated for supposed infidelities with pagans and Papists. But what is bred in the bone, the proverb tells us, will break out in the flesh, and it did not require the subtlety of Hume's logic to demonstrate that no cement can keep together pious conclusions and atheistic premises. After bestowing a few of her favours on the semi-Christians at home, the Magdalen eloped to the

anti-Christians of the Continent, the Pallas αἰγιόχος of the encyclopaedists and the Jacobins' Goddess of Reason.

I am fully aware, my Lord, that scarcely one in ten thousand is sufficiently interested in the first problems of speculative science to give himself any concern about the truth or falsehood of the solutions, or even to understand the terms in which they are enunciated. What matters it to the world, it will be said; of what consequence can it be to society at large, that the physiology alone taught or tolerated in the present day sets out with a pure fiction, an ultimate particle, to wit? . . . What is all this to the world at large?

To an objection so plausible and so obvious, I must have remained silent, my Lord, if the history of all civilized nations in all ages had not supplied the decisive answer; if the recorded experience of mankind had not attested the important fact, that the taste and character, the whole tone of manners and feeling, and above all the religious (at least the theological) and the political tendencies of the public mind, have ever borne such a close correspondence, so distinct and evident an analogy to the predominant system of speculative philosophy, whatever it has chanced to be, as must remain inexplicable, unless we admit not only a reaction and interdependence on both sides, but a powerful though most often indirect of the last on all the former. The reliefless surfaces, imprisoned in their wiry outlines, as so many definitions personified of the Church artists during the ascendancy of the schoolmen; the coincidence of the revival of Platonism by Dante and Petrarch, with the appearance of Giotto, and the six other strong masters preserved, in part, in the Cemeterio at Pisa, and the culmination of the 'divine philosophy' with Michael Angelo, Raffael, Titian and Correggio; the rise and reign

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of the eclectic school, characterized by a nominal, national, idealess dogmatism, with the Caracci, and the Academic painters; the usurpation of the name of painters and statuaries by the layers-on of inveterate likenesses, and the marble periwig-makers under the common-sense philosophy; and lastly the marked predilection of Sir J. Reynolds for a species of semi-Platonism, originating in the impressions made on his mind in early youth by a Platonist; these are but the ribs, abutments and sea-marks of a long line of correspondences in the arts of taste to the opposite coast of speculative philosophy. Yet even in these the coincidence is far too regular to be resolved into mere accident.

On religion, which is at all times the centre of gravity in the machine, and with and through which philosophy acts on the community in general, the influence is still more manifest . . . What indeed but the wages of death can be expected from a doctrine which degrades the Deity into a blank hypothesis, and that the hypothesis of a clockwork-maker . . . : a godless nature, and a natureless, abstract God, now an extramundane Homo Magnus, from whom the world had its being . . . and now the Sunday (or red-letter) name of gravitation, whereon the *pater omnipotens* aether is not employed instead. One good thing, however, we owe to this aether; it detects the hollowness of the usual excuse pretended by the doctors of the corpuscular theory, that their attraction and repulsion are but fictions in a *memoria technica*, meant to connect, not explain, the phenomena of which they are the generic exponents. With the truly great Kepler's centripetal and centrifugal agencies, this is really the cause; the terms simply generalize the facts. But the very terms substituted, and chosen in preference, imply causative agency; and I will hazard the assertion that there

is not a single chapter in the works of any modern theorist, a disciple of Locke, Hartley or Condillac, that will not be found to contain positions utterly subversive of this pretence. If anything could have recalled the physics and physiology of the age to the dynamic theory of the eldest philosophy, it must have been the late successful researches of the chemists, which almost force on the very senses the facts of mutual penetration and intus-susception, which have supplied a series of experimental proofs that in all pure phenomena we behold only the copula, the balance, or indifference, of opposite energies. The recent relapse, therefore, of our chemists to the atomistic scheme, and the almost unanimous acceptance of Dalton's theory in England and Le Sage's in France, determine the intellectual character and tendencies of the age with the force of an *experimentum crucis*.

I reverence the sublime and prosperous application of the higher geometry to the investigation of the world, as far as the nature of masses is revealed by quantity, and thus, as it were, self-submitted to the processes of scientific calculus. But let it not be forgotten that this is a scion, the one healthy and prosperous gift from the Platonic tree. I appreciate at their true value the useful inventions and brilliant discoveries of the modern chemistry from Stahl to Davy, but I dare not overlook that they were made during the suspension of the mechanic philosophy relatively to chemical theory; and I know that since the year 1798, every experiment of importance had been distinctly pre-announced by the founders or restorers of the constructive or dynamic doctrine in the only country in which a man can exercise his understanding in the light of his reason without being supposed to be out of his senses; and I persist in the belief (Appendix to the first Lay Sermon, p. xvii) that 'a few brilliant inventions

have been dearly purchased at the loss of all communion with life and the spirit of nature'.

Most significantly, my Lord, did the ancients (Greek and Oriental) name the great object of physiology the genesis, the φύσις, the *natura rerum*, i.e. the birth of things. They searched after and recorded the acts of the world, and the self-subsistence yet inter-dependence, the difference yet identity, of the forms they expressed by the symbol of begetting. With the moderns, on the contrary, nothing ever grows, all is made. Growth itself is but a disguised mode of being made by the superinduction of *jam data* on a *jam datum*. This habit of thinking permeates the whole mass of our principles, and it is in spite of ourselves that we are not like a horde of Americans, a people without a history, for the historic feeling is evanescent, even in the construction of history itself. Can it be then the result of accident that the political dogmata, the principles of which are notoriously affirmed and supported in the writings of Locke, that 'the perilous stuff' that still weighs on the heart of Europe, and from which all the dire antidotes of the late Revolution have not yet 'cleansed the foul bosom'; is it but a sport of chance that these need only borrow a few terms from the mechanic philosophy to become a facsimile of its doctrines?

The independent atoms of the state of nature cluster round a common centre and make a convention; that convention becomes a constitution of Government; then the makers and the made make a contract, which ensures to the former the right of breaking it whenever it shall seem good to them, and assigns to the governed an indefeasible right of sovereignty over their governors, which being withstood, this one-sided compact is dissolved, the compages fall abroad into the independent atoms aforesaid, which are

then to dance the Hayes till a new constitution is made for them. For, as Mr. Locke and Major Cartwright sagaciously observe, an atom is an atom, neither more nor less, and by the pure attribute of his atom has an equal claim with every other atom to be constituent and demiurgic on all occasions. But, as they are of diverse figures, they are rather apt to clash, in which case the majority must either keep under or expel the minority, and the system ends, as it began, in 'physical force', as the sovereign people are sure to learn, where the minority happens to consist of a ruffian at the head of an army of ruffians. Can it be mere accident, too, that this precious scheme was first drawn into experiment, and, as far as it was absurdly permitted, first realized by the very nation among whom our modern philosophy enjoyed the most exclusive dominion, by the people that of all the nations of Europe were most characterized by the divulsion and insulation of the sensual present, by the ignorance and contempt of all that connects it with the past, and the wanton assaults on all the principles and feelings which constitute its most effective relations to the future?

It is high time, My Lord, that the subjects of Christian Governments should be taught that neither historically or morally, in fact or by right, have men made the State; but that the State, and that alone, makes them men: a truth that can be opposed by those only who confound the State with the few individuals who have taken on themselves the troublesome and thankless duty of guarding it against any practical exhibitions of their new state-craft; that the name of country is but a sound if it be not true; that the flux of individuals in any one moment of existence is there for the sake of the State, far more than the State for them, though both positions are true proportionally; that the *jus divinum*

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of the supreme magistracy is a tenet that has been discredited only by a gross perversion of its sense; lastly, that states and kingdoms grow, and are not to be made; and that in all political revolutions, whether for the weal or chastisement of a nation, the people are but the sprigs and boughs in a forest, tossed against each other, or moved all in the same direction, by an agency in which their own will has the least share. As long as the principles of our gentry and clergy are grounded in a false philosophy, which retains but the name of logic, and has succeeded in rendering metaphysics a term of opprobrium, all the Sunday and national schools in the world will not preclude schism and Jacobinism in the middle and lower classes. The predominant philosophy is the keynote. . . .

(C) THE STATE AND INDUSTRIAL CONDITIONS : 1818

[Any note on Coleridge's attitude to the State and its functions would be incomplete without some reference to his work in support of Sir Robert Peel's Bill for the shortening of the hours of labour of children in cotton factories, 1818. He wrote to Crabb Robinson: 'Can you furnish me with any other instances in which the legislature has interfered with what is ironically called "Free Labour", i.e., dared to prohibit soul-murder on the part of the rich and self-slaughter on the part of the poor! . . .' He composed two circulars in support of Peel's measure. They were privately printed, with an introduction by Edmund Gosse, in 1913. The following excerpts are taken from the first of them.]

In answer to the four assertions of the opponents of the BILL:
1. *That legislative interference with free labour is improper.*

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2. *That it is dangerous to begin a course of innovation without any certainty at what point it may stop.*
3. *That the measures proposed are inadequate to remove the evil and are calculated to increase discontent by attracting attention to the same and exciting hopes that are incompatible with 'the present state of society and the indispensable conditions of a commercial and manufacturing nation'.*
4. *That the remedy should be left to the manufacturers themselves, the 'humane spirit of this enlightened age, and the consequent growth and increasing influence of enlightened self-interest':*

Now, in reply to the first . . . we might fairly inquire on what grounds is this impropriety presumed? Certainly not on past experience or the practice of the British Constitution; the Statute Books are (perhaps too much) crowded with proofs to the contrary. The first institution by law of Apprenticeships was an interference with free labour . . . The recent regulations of the labour to be required from the apprentices are still more unfavourable to the presumption . . . Whether this is desirable or no, is not the question. Yet we live in age the events of which may pardonably suggest the recollection that the states and countries which have been most prosperous in trade and commerce, and at the same time most remarkable for the industry, morality and public spirit of the inhabitants, as Great Britain, Holland, the Hanseatic and other free towns of Germany, have been governed and regulated by a system of law and policy in almost direct opposition to the so-called physiocratic principles of more modern political economists . . . But if this objection to interference in free labour can derive no sanction from the *practice* of the Legislature, still less can it appeal to

the *principles* and *spirit* of the British Constitution: and pardon us, if we add, God forbid that it should! Only under a military despotism, entitled to dispense with it at all times for its own purposes, could such a principle be even partially realized; and then only when it was the object of the government to reduce all classes to insignificance but those of soldiers and agriculturists. The *principle* of *all* constitutional law is to make the claims of each as much as possible compatible with the claims of all, as individuals, and with those of the commonweal as a whole; and out of this adjustment, the claims of the individual first become *Rights*. Every Canal Bill proves that there is no species of property which the legislature does not possess and exercise the right of controlling and limiting, as soon as the right of the individuals is shown to be disproportionately injurious to the community. And that the *contra bonos mores*, the subversion of morals, is deemed in our laws a public injury, it would be superfluous to demonstrate.

But *free* Labour! — in what sense, not utterly sophistical, can the labour of children, extorted from the want of their parents, ‘their poverty but not their will consenting’, be called *free*? . . . It is our duty to declare aloud, that if the labour were indeed free, the employer would purchase, and the labourer sell, what the former had no right to buy, and the latter no right to dispose of: namely, the labourer’s health, life and well-being. These belong not to himself *alone*, but to his friends, to his parents, to his King, to his Country, and to God. If the labour were indeed free, the contract would approach, on the one side, too near to suicide, on the other to manslaughter. The objection therefore would far better suit those who maintain the existence of rights, self-originated and independent of duties, than

English subjects who pretend to no *rights* that do not refer to some *duty* as their origin and true foundation. . . .

To the second objection there needs no better reply than that of Sir Robert Peel, the more than mere *disinterested* originator of the Bill in question. What are these claims, with an endless succession of which you threaten us, as the consequence of conceding the present? If they are equally just . . . in God's name let them be conceded! And if they are not such, the passing of the present Bill can form no *precedent*. To this plain and manly argument we can add nothing. . . .

This our reply to the second objection is equally valid as applied to the third — namely, that the proposed plan is a mere palliative calculated to excite discontent in the sufferers, than to effect any considerable diminution of the evil . . . Who, we would ask, are to be the judges whether the proposed measures will or will not be a serious diminution of the sufferings and evils complained of? . . . Surely, either the sufferers or their parents and nearest relatives. But the latter are among the most earnest petitioners for this Bill: and if the tender age of the former precludes, or would throw suspicion on, any petition from themselves, we have here too as in the intrepid assertions of their superior health and happiness, a safe appeal to common sense. Who does not know that in a journey too long for the traveller's strength, it is the last few miles that torment him by fatigue and injure him by exhaustion? . . . Substitute a child employed on tasks the most opposite to all its natural instincts, were it only from their improgressive and wearying uniformity — in a heated stifling impure atmosphere, fevered by noise and glare, both limbs and spirits outwearied — and that at the tenth hour, he has still three, four, or five hours more to

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look forward to. Will he, will the poor little *sufferer*, be brought to believe that these hours are mere trifles — or the privilege of going home not worth his thanks? Generalities are apt to deceive us. Individualize the sufferings which it is the object of this Bill to remedy, follow up the detail in some one case with a human sympathy, and the deception vanishes.

But we hasten to the fourth and last objection, namely, that the reform of all these grievances may be safely trusted in these enlightened times to the good sense and humanity of the masters themselves. This is, doubtless, highly flattering to the present age, and still more so to that which is to follow. It is, however, sufficient for us to have proved that it remains a mere assertion . . . Nay, it is notorious that within the last twenty years the time and quantum of the labour extorted from the children has been increasing. The growth of the sciences among the few, and the consequent increase of the conveniences of life among the people at large, are, however, far from necessarily implying an *enlightened* age in that sense which alone applies to the case in question. There are few who are not enlightened enough to understand their duties, few but must *wink hard* not to see the path laid out for them. Something else is wanted here, the warmth to impel, and not the knowledge to guide. The age had been complimented with the epithets of enlightened, humane, etc., years before the abolition of the Slave Trade. And was that Trade abolished by the increasing humanity, the enlightened self-interest, of the slave-owners? As far as the parties immediately interested are concerned, dare our Legislators even now trust to these influences? The Bills passed and the one now before the House, concerning the Slave Trade, are the best reply.

Anxiously have we wished to avoid every invidious remark. But we should be treacherous to the measure of which we are the earnest, though humble, advocates, if we left wholly unnoticed the singular coincidence between the present Bill and that for the abolition of the Slave Trade, in the order and progress of the arguments adopted by the opponents of each . . . We, in the present instance, are appealing to a precedent instead of making one; and . . . every argument of any force, which the opponents of the Bill have urged against it, has been declared invalid, as applied to the continuance of any system *admitted* to be cruel and unjust, and solemnly negatived by the British Parliament, in the glorious precedent of the Abolition of the Slave Trade.

(d) POLITICAL ECONOMY

What solemn humbug this modern political economy is! What is there true of the little that is true in their dogmatic books, which is not a simple deduction from the moral and religious *credenda* and *agenda* of any good man, and with which we are not all previously acquainted, and upon which every man of common sense instinctively acted? I know none. . . .

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Is it not lamentable — is it not even marvellous — that the monstrous practical sophism of Malthus should now have gotten complete possession of the leading men of the Kingdom! Such an essential lie in morals — such a practical lie in fact as it is, too! I solemnly declare that I do not believe that all the heresies and sects and factions which the ignorance and the weakness and the wickedness of man have ever given

birth to, were altogether so disgraceful to man as a Christian, a philosopher, a statesman, or citizen, as this abominable tenet. It should be exposed by reasoning in the form of [vii] ridicule. . . .

The entire tendency of the modern or Malthusian political economy is to denationalize, and to make the love of our country a foolish superstition. It would dig up the charcoal foundations of the temple of Ephesus to burn as fuel for a [viii] steam-engine.

It is not uncommon for 100,000 *operatives* (mark this word, for words *in this sense* are things) to be out of employment at once in the cotton districts (this was in 1820), and, thrown upon parochial relief, are dependent upon hard-hearted taskmasters for food. The Malthusian doctrine would indeed afford a certain means of relief if this were not a two-fold question. If, when you say to a man, 'You have no claim upon me; you have your allotted part to perform in the world, so have I. In a state of nature, indeed, had I food, I should offer you a share from sympathy, from humanity; but in this advanced and artificial state of society, I cannot afford you relief; *you must starve*. You came into the world when it could not sustain you.' What would be this man's answer? He would say, 'You disclaim all connection with me; I have no claims upon you? *I can then have no duties towards you*, and this pistol shall put me in possession of your wealth. You may leave a law behind you which shall hang me, but what man who saw assured starvation before him, ever feared hanging?' It is this accursed practice of ever considering *only* what seems *expedient* for the occasion, disjointed from all principle or enlarged systems of action, of never listening to the true and unerring impulses of our better nature, which has led the colder-hearted men

to the study of political economy, which has turned our Parliament into a real committee of public safety. In it is all power vested; and in a few years we shall either be governed by an aristocracy, or, what is still more likely, by a contemptible democratical oligarchy of glib economists, compared to which the worst form of aristocracy would be a blessing.

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You talk about making this article cheaper by reducing its price in the market from 8d. to 6d. But suppose, in so doing, you have rendered your country weaker against a foreign foe; suppose you have demoralized thousands of your fellow-countrymen, and have sown discontent between one class of society and another, your article is tolerably dear, I take it, after all. Is not its real price enhanced to every Christian and patriot a hundred-fold?

[x]

(c) EDUCATION

[Mistaken ideas on the education of the people]:

(i) *That it is dangerous*

Our statesman, who survey with jealous dread all plans for the education of the lower orders, may be thought to proceed on the system of antagonist muscles; and in the belief that the closer a nation shuts its eyes the wider it will open its hands. Or do they act on the principle that the *status belli* is the natural relation between the people and the government, and that it is prudent to secure the result of the contest by gouging the adversary in the first instance? Alas! the policy of the maxim is on a level with its honesty. The Philistines had put out the eyes of Samson, and thus

as they thought fitted him to drudge and grind . . . But his darkness added to his fury without diminishing his strength, and the very pillars of the temple of oppression . . . 'he tugged, he shook, till down they came' . . . The error might be less unpardonable with a statesman of the continent; — but with Englishmen, who have Ireland in one direction and Scotland in another: the one in ignorance, sloth and rebellion, — in the other general information, industry and [xi] loyalty, — verily, it is not error merely, but infatuation.

[*The*] disposition to think that, as the peace of nations has been disturbed by the diffusion of a false light, it may be re-established by excluding the people from all knowledge and all prospect of amelioration, [*is common among the upper classes*]. O! never, never! Reflection and stirrings of mind, with all their restlessness, and all the errors which result from their imperfection, from the Too much, because Too little, are come into the world. The powers that awaken and foster the spirit of curiosity are to be found in every village: books are in every hovel. The infant's cries are hushed with picture-books: and the cottager's child sheds his first bitter tears over pages, which render it impossible for the man to be treated or governed as a child. Here, as in so many other cases, the inconveniences that have arisen from a thing's having become too general, are best removed [xii] by making it universal.

(ii) *That reading and writing are education*

The other and contrary mistake proceeds from the assumption that a national education will have been realized whenever the people at large have been taught to read and write. Now, among the many means to the desired end, this is doubtless one, and not the least important. But neither

is it the most so. Much less can it be considered education, which consists in educating the faculties and forming the habits; the means varying according to the sphere in which the individuals to be educated are likely to act and become useful . . . Reading and writing we should place among the [xiii] *means* of education instead of regarding it as the *end*. At no time, and in no rank of life, can knowledge be made our prime object without injury to the understanding, and certain perversion of those moral institutions to the cultivation of which it must be instrumental and subservient, or, vapour and nothingness as the human intellect is [*when*] separated from that better light which lifts and transpierces it, even that which it has will be taken away.

The neglect of this truth is the worm at the root of certain modern improvements in the modes of teaching, in comparison with which we have been called on to despise our great public schools,

‘In whose halls are hung
Armoury of the invincible knights of old,’

and we have been instructed how to metamorphose children into prodigies; and prodigies with a vengeance have I known thus produced, prodigies of self-conceit, shallowness, arrogance and infidelity. Instead of storing the memory, during the period when the memory is the predominant faculty, with facts for the after-exercise of the judgment, and instead of awakening by the noblest models the fond and unmixed *love* and *admiration* which is the natural and graceful temper of youth, these nurslings of improved pedagogy are taught to dispute and deride, to suspect all but their own and their lecturer’s wisdom, and to hold nothing sacred from their contempt but their own contemptible arrogance; boy-

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graduates in all the technical and all the dirty passions and [xiv] impudence of anonymous criticism.

(iii) *That the Monitorial system is adequate*

I do not hesitate to declare, that whether I consider the nature of the discipline adopted, or the plan of poisoning the children's minds with a sort of potential infidelity under the 'liberal idea' of teaching those points only of religious faith in which all denominations agree, I cannot but denounce the so-called Lancasterian schools as pernicious beyond all power of compensation by the new acquirement of reading and writing. But take even Dr. Bell's original and unsophisticated plan, which I myself regard as an especial gift of Providence to the human race; and suppose this incomparable machine, this vast moral steam-engine, to have been adopted and in free motion throughout the Empire; it would yet appear to me a most dangerous delusion to rely on it as if this of itself formed an efficient national education. We cannot, I repeat, honour the scheme too highly as a prominent and necessary part of the great process; but it will neither supersede, nor can it be substituted for, sundry other measures that are at least equally important. And these are such measures, too, as unfortunately involve the necessity of sacrifices on the side of the rich and powerful more costly and far more difficult than the yearly subscription of a few pounds; — such measures as demand more self-denial than the expenditure of time in a committee or of eloquence in a public meeting.

Nay, let Dr. Bell's philanthropic end have been realized, and the proposed *modicum* of learning have become universal; yet, convinced of its insufficiency to stem the strong currents set in motion from an opposite point, I dare not assume

myself that it may not be driven backward by them and become confluent with the evils which it was intended to preclude. [xv]

(iv) *That Infant Schools are preferable to 'cottage-home education'*

Is it found that an infant-school child, who has been bawling all day a column of the multiplication-table, or a verse from the Bible, grows up a more dutiful son or daughter to its parents? Are domestic charities on the increase amongst families under this system? In a great town, in our present state of society, perhaps such schools may be a justifiable expedient — a choice of the lesser evil; but as for driving these establishments into the country villages, and breaking up the cottage home education, I think it one of the most miserable mistakes which the well-intentioned people of the day have yet made. . . . [xvi]

I am greatly deceived if one preliminary to an efficient education of the labouring classes be not the recurrence to a more manly discipline of the intellect on the part of the learned themselves, in short, a thorough re-casting of the moulds in which the minds of our gentry, the characters of our future land-owners, magistrates and senators, are to receive their shape and fashion. [xvii]

(f) THE GREAT REFORM BILL: 1832

I have heard but two arguments of any weight adduced in favour of passing the Great Reform Bill, and they are in substance these: (1) We will blow your brains out if you

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don't pass it; (2) We will drag you through a horse-pond if
[xviii] you don't pass it; and there is a good deal of force in both.

It is curious to trace the operation of the moral law of polarity in the history of politics, religion, etc. When the maximum of one tendency has been attained, there is no gradual decrease, but a direct transition to its minimum, till the opposite tendency has attained its maximum; and then you see another corresponding revulsion. With the Restoration came in all at once the mechanico-corpuscular philosophy, which with the increase of manufactures, trade, and arts, made everything in philosophy, religion, and poetry objective; till, at length, attachment to mere external worldliness and forms got to its maximum, when out burst the French Revolution; and with it everything became immediately subjective, without any object at all. The Rights of Man, the Sovereignty of the People, were subject and object both. We are now, I think, on the turning-point again. This Reform [Bill] seems the *ne plus ultra* of that tendency of the public mind which substitutes its own undefined notions or passions for real objects and historical actualities. There is not one of the ministers — except the one or two revolutionists among them — who has even given us a hint, throughout this long struggle, as to *what* he really does believe will be the product of the Bill; what sort of House of Commons it will make for the purpose of governing this Empire soberly and safely. No; they have actualized for a moment a wish, a fear, a passion, but not an
[xix] idea.

The present ministers have, in my judgment, been guilty of two things pre-eminently wicked, *sensu politico*, in their conduct upon this Reform Bill. First, they have endeavoured to carry a fundamental change in the material and mode of

action of the Government of the country by so exciting the passions, and playing upon the necessary ignorance of the numerical majority of the nation, that all freedom and utility of discussion, by competent heads, in the proper place should be precluded. In doing this they have used, or sanctioned the use of, arguments which may be applied with equal or even greater force to the carrying of any measure whatever, no matter how atrocious in its character or destructive in its consequences. They have appealed directly to the argument of the greater number of voices, no matter whether the utterers were drunk or sober, competent or not competent; and they have done the utmost in their power to rase out the sacred principle in politics of a representation of interests, and to introduce the mad and barbarizing scheme of a delegation of individuals. [xx]

Is the House of Commons to be reconstructed on the principle of a representation of interests, or of a delegation of men? If on the former, we may perhaps see our way; if on the latter, you can never, in reason, stop short of universal suffrage; and in that case I am sure that women have as good a right to vote as men. [xxi]

The miserable tendency of all is to destroy our nationality, which consists, in a principal degree, in our representative government, and to convert it into a degrading delegation of the populace. There is no unity for a people but in a representation of national interests a delegation from the passions or wishes of the individuals themselves is a rope of sand. [xxii]

Secondly, they have made the *King* the prime mover in all this political wickedness: they have made the *King* tell his people that they were deprived of their rights, and, by direct and necessary implication, that they and their

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ancestors for a century past had been slaves: they have made the king vilify the memory of his own brother and [xxiii] father.

Rights! There are no rights whatever without corresponding duties . . . When the government and the aristocracy of this country had subordinated *persons* to *things*, and treated the one like the other, the poor, with [xxiv] some reason, learned to set up *rights* above duties. Look at the history of the growth of our Constitution, and you will see that our ancestors never upon any occasion stated, as a ground for claiming any of their privileges, an abstract right inherent in themselves; you will nowhere in our parliamentary records find the miserable sophism of the Rights of Man. No! They were too wise for that. They took good care to refer their claims to custom and prescription, and boldly — sometimes very impudently — asserted them upon traditionary and constitutional grounds. The Bill is bad enough, God knows; but the arguments of its advocates, and the manner of their advocacy, are a thousand times [xxv] worse than the Bill itself. . .

I am afraid the Conservative party see but one half of the truth. The mere extension of the franchise is not the evil; I should be glad to see it greatly extended — there is no harm in that, *per se*; the mischief is that the franchise is nominally extended, but to such classes, and in such a manner, that a practical disfranchisement of all above, and a discontenting [xxvi] of all below, a favoured class, are the unavoidable results.

I could not help smiling, in reading the report of Lord Grey's speech in the House of Lords, the other night, when he asked Lord Wicklow whether he seriously believed that he, Lord Grey, or any of the ministers, intended to subvert the institutions of the country. Had I been in Lord Wick-

low's place, I should have been tempted to answer this question something in the following way: '... You have destroyed the freedom of Parliament; you have done your best to shut the door of the House of Commons to the property, the birth, the rank, the wisdom, of the people, and have flung it open to their passions and their follies. You have disfranchised the gentry, and the real patriotism of the nation: you have agitated and exasperated the mob, and thrown the balance of political power into the hands of that class (the shop-keepers) which, in all countries and in all ages, has been, is now, and ever will be, the least patriotic and the least conservative of any. . . .' [xx

Government is not founded on property, taken merely as such, in the abstract; it is founded on *unequal* property; the inequality is the essential term in the position. The phrases — higher, middle, and lower class, with reference to this point of representation — are delusive; no such divisions as classes actually exist in society. There is an indissoluble blending and interfusion of persons from top to bottom; and no man can trace a line of separation through them, except such a confessedly unmeaning and unjustifiable line of political empiricism as £10 householders. I cannot discover a ray of principle in the Government plan — not a hint of the effect of the change upon the balance of the estates of the realm — not a remark on the nature of the constitution of England and the character of the property of so many millions of its inhabitants. Half the wealth of this country is purely artificial — existing only in and on the credit given to it by the integrity and honesty of the nation. This property appears, in many instances, a heavy burden to the numerical majority of the people, and they believe that it causes all their distress: and they are now to have the

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maintenance of this property committed to their good faith
[xxviii] — the lamb to the wolves!

In that imperfect state of society in which our system of representation began, the interests of the country were pretty
[xxix] exactly commensurate with its municipal divisions . . . The democracy of England . . . was where it ought to be, in the
[xxx] corporations, the vestries, the joint-stock companies . . . The counties, the towns, and the seaports, accurately enough represented the only interests then existing; that is to say, the landed, the shop-keeping or manufacturing, and the mercantile. But for a century past, at least, this division has become notoriously imperfect, some of the most vital interests of the empire being now totally unconnected with any English localities. Yet now, when the evil and the want are known, we are to abandon the accommodations which the necessity of the case had worked out for itself, and begin again with a rigidly territorial plan of representation! . . . Undoubtedly it is a great evil that there should be such an evident discrepancy between the law and the practice of the constitution in the matter of the representation. Such a direct, yet clandestine, contravention of solemn resolutions and established laws is immoral, and greatly injurious to the cause of legal loyalty and general subordination in the minds of the people. But then a statesman should consider that these very contraventions of law in practice point out to him the places in the body politic which need a remodelling of the law. You acknowledge a certain necessity for indirect representation in the present day, and that such representation has been instinctively obtained by means contrary to law; why then do you not approximate the useless law to the useful practice, instead of abandoning both law and
[xxxi] practice for a completely new system of your own?

It has never yet been seen, or clearly announced, that democracy, as such, is no proper element in the constitution of a State . . . Democracy is the healthful life-blood which circulates through the veins and arteries, which supports the system, but which ought never to appear externally, as the mere blood itself. [xxxii]

‘When the people speak loudly and unanimously it is from their being strongly impressed by the godhead or the demon. Only exclude the (by no means extravagant) supposition of a demoniac possession, and *then* Vox Populi, Vox Dei.’ So thought Sir Philip Sydney, who, in the great revolution of the Netherlands, considered the universal and simultaneous adoption of the same principles as a proof of the divine presence; and on that belief, and on that alone, grounded his assurance of its successful Result. [xxxiii]

I never said that the *vox populi* was, of course, the *vox dei*. It may be; but it may be, and with equal probability, *a priori*, *vox diaboli*. That the voice of ten millions of men calling for the same thing is a spirit, I believe; but whether that be a spirit of Heaven or Hell, I can only know by trying the thing called for by the prescript of reason and God’s will . . . I believe that the feeling of the multitude will, in [xxxiv] most cases, be in favour of something good; but this it is which I perceive, that they are always under the domination of some one feeling or view; whereas truth, and above all, practical wisdom, must be the result of a wide comprehension of the more and the less, the balance and the counter-balance. [xxxv]

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(g) PERSONALITIES AND PROBLEMS

The French Revolution: third phase

Let it be remembered by both parties, and indeed by controversialists on all subjects, that every speculative error which boasts a multitude of advocates, has its golden as well as its dark side; that there is always some truth connected [xxxvi] with it. . . .

[*The system of the French Revolutionaries*] had its golden side for the noblest minds; and I should act the part of a coward if I disguised my convictions that the errors of the aristocratic party were full as gross and far less excusable . . . The most prudent as well as the most honest mode of defending the existing arrangements would have been to have candidly admitted what could not with truth be denied, and then to have shown that, though the things complained of were evils, they were necessary evils; or, if they were removable, yet that the consequences of the heroic medicines recommended by the revolutionists would be far more dreadful than the disease. . . .

But instead of this, they precluded the possibility of being listened to, even by the gentlest and most ingenuous among the friends of the French Revolution, denying or attempting to palliate facts that were equally notorious and unjustifiable, and supplying the lack of brain by an overflow of gall. While they lamented with tragic outcries the injured monarch and the exiled noble, they displayed the most disgusting insensibility to the privations, sufferings, and manifold oppressions of the great mass of the continental population, and a blindness or callousness still more offensive to the crimes and unutterable abominations of their oppressors . . . Thus, and by their infuriated panegyrics of the

former state of France, they played into the hands of their worst and most dangerous antagonists . . . In order to oppose Jacobinism they imitated it in its worst features . . . They justified the corruptions of the state in the same spirit of sophistry, by the same vague arguments of general reason, and the same disregard of ancient ordinances and established opinions, with which the state itself had been attacked by the Jacobins. The wages of state-dependence were represented as sacred as the property won by industry or derived from a long line of ancestors.

It was indeed evident to thinking men that both parties were playing the same game with different counters. If the Jacobins ran wild with the rights of man, their antagonists flew off as extravagantly from the sober good sense of our forefathers, and idolized as mere an abstraction in the rights of sovereigns. Nor was this confined to sovereigns. They defended the exemptions and privileges of all privileged orders on the presumption of their inalienable right to them, however inexpedient they might have been found, as universally and abstractly as if these privileges had been decreed by the Supreme Wisdom, instead of being the off-spring of chance or violence, or the inventions of human prudence. . . .

But alas! the panic of property had been struck in the first instance for party purposes; and when it became general, its propagators caught it themselves, and ended in believing their own lie; even as our bulls in Borrowdale sometimes run mad with the echo of their own bellowing. [xxxvii]

Edmund Burke: three stages of appreciation

1809: It is bad policy to represent a political system as having no charm but for robbers and assassins, and no natural origin but in the brains of fools or madmen, when

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experience has proved that the great danger of the system consists in the peculiar fascination it is calculated to exert on noble and imaginative spirits; on all those who, in the amiable intoxication of youthful benevolence, are apt to mistake their own best virtues and choicest powers for the average qualities and attributes of the human character . . . I cannot repel the conviction from my mind, that in part to this error and in part to a certain inconsistency in his fundamental principles, we are to attribute the small number of converts made by Burke during his life-time.

Let me not be misunderstood. I do not mean that this great man supported different principles at different eras of his political life. On the contrary, no man was ever more like himself! . . . The inconsistency to which I allude is of a different kind: it is the want of congruity in the principles appealed to in different parts of the same work, it is an apparent versatility of the principle with the occasion. If his opponents are theorists, then everything is to be founded on prudence, on mere calculation of expediency; and every man is represented as acting according to the state of his own immediate self-interest. Are his opponents calculators? Then calculation itself is represented as a sort of crime. God has given us feelings and we are to obey them! and the most absurd prejudices become venerable, to which these feelings have given consecration.

I have not forgotten that Burke himself defended these half contradictions, on the pretext of balancing the too much on the one side by a too much on the other. But never can I believe but that the straight line must needs be the nearest; and that where there is the most, and the most unalloyed truth, there will be the greatest and most permanent power of persuasion.

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But the fact was that Burke, in his public character, found himself, as it were, in a Noah's Ark, with a very few men and a great many beasts! He felt how much his immediate power was lessened by the very circumstance of his measureless superiority to those about him: he acted, therefore, under a perpetual system of compromise. . . . [xxxviii]

1817: Let the scholar . . . refer only to the speeches and writings of Edmund Burke at the commencement of the American War and compare them with his speeches and writings at the commencement of the French Revolution. He will find the principles exactly the same, and the deductions the same; but the practical inferences almost opposite in the one case from those drawn in the other; yet in both equally legitimate and in both equally confirmed by the results. Whence gained he the superiority of foresight? . . . The satisfactory solution is, that Edmund Burke possessed and had sedulously sharpened that eye which sees all things, actions, and events, in relation to the laws that determine their existence and circumscribe their possibility. He referred habitually to principles. He was a scientific statesman; and therefore a seer. Every principle contains in itself the germs of a prophecy. . . . [xxxix]

1833: There is not one word that I would add or withdraw from this, scarcely one which I would substitute. I can read Burke, and apply everything not merely temporary to the present most fearful condition of our country. I cannot conceive a time or a state of things in which the writings of Burke will not have the highest value. [xl]

Burke was indeed a great man. No one ever read history so philosophically as he seems to have done. Yet, until he could associate his general principles with some sordid interest, panic of property, Jacobinism, etc. he was a mere

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dinner-bell. Hence you will find so many half-truths in his speeches and writings. Nevertheless, let us heartily acknowledge his transcendent greatness. He would have been more influential if he had less surpassed his contemporaries, Fox [xli] and Pitt, men of much inferior minds in all respects.

Cobbett

Have you seen Cobbett's last number? . . . he has given great additional publicity to weighty truths, as, ex. gr., the hollowness of commercial wealth; and from whatever dirty corner or straw moppet the ventriloquist Truth causes her words to proceed, I not only listen, but must bear witness that it is Truth talking . . . One deep, most deep, impression of melancholy did Cobbett's letter to Lord Liverpool leave on my mind, — the conviction that, wretch as he is, he is an overmatch in intellect for those, in whose hands Providence, in its retributive justice, seems to place the destinies of our country and who yet rise into respectability when we com- [xlii] pare them with their parliamentary opponents.

The Cobbett is assuredly a strong and battering production throughout, and in the best bad style of this political rhinoceros, with his coat of armour of dry and wet mud, and his one horn of brutal strength on the nose of his scorn and [xliii] hate; not to forget the flaying rasp of his tongue. . . .

Lord Liverpool

Lord Liverpool is the single stay of this Ministry, but he is not a man of a directing mind. He cannot ride on the whirlwind. He serves as the isthmus to connect one half of the Cabinet with the other. He always gives you the common sense of the matter, and in that it is that his strength in [xliv] debate lies.

The Duke of Wellington

I sometimes fear that the Duke of Wellington is too much disposed to imagine that he can govern a great nation by word of command, in the same way in which he governed a highly disciplined army. He seems to be unaccustomed to, and to despise, the inconsistencies, the weaknesses, the bursts of heroism followed by prostration and cowardice, which invariably characterize all popular efforts. He forgets that, after all, it is from such efforts that all the great and noble institutions of the world have come; and that, on the other hand, the discipline and organization of armies have been only like the flight of the cannon-ball, the object of which is destruction. [xlv]

The Anglican Church

The fatal error into which the peculiar character of the English Reformation threw our Church, has borne bitter fruit ever since, — I mean that of its clinging to court and State, instead of cultivating the people. The Church ought to be a mediator between the people and the Government, between the poor and the rich. As it is, I fear the Church has let the hearts of the common people be stolen from it. See how differently the Church of Rome — wiser in its generation — has always acted in this particular. For a long time past the Church of England seems to me to have been blighted with prudence, as it is called. I wish with all my heart we had a little zealous imprudence. [xlvi]

The present prospects of the Church weigh heavily on my soul. O! that the words of a statesman-like philosophy could win their way through the ignorant zealotry and sordid vulgarity of the leaders of the day! [xlvii]

There seems to me at present to be a curse upon the

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English Church, and upon the governors of all institutions connected with the orderly advancement of national piety and knowledge; it is the curse of prudence, as they miscall it, — in fact, of fear. Clergymen are now almost afraid to explain in their pulpits the grounds of their being Protestants. They are completely cowed by the vulgar harassings of the press and of our Hectoring sciolists in Parliament. There should be no *party* politics in the pulpit, to be sure; but every [xlviii] church in England ought to resound with national politics . . .

The Church is the last relic of our nationality. Would to God that the bishops and the clergy in general could once fully understand that the Christian Church and the national Church are as little to be confounded as divided! I think the fate of the Reform Bill, in itself, of comparatively minor importance; the fate of the national Church occupies my [xlix] mind with greater intensity.

The blessings of commerce and machinery

Commerce has enriched thousands, it has been the cause of the spread of knowledge and of science, but has it added one particle of happiness or of moral improvement? Has it given us a truer insight into our duties, or tended to revive and sustain in us the better feelings of our nature? No! No! when I consider what the consequences have been, when I consider that whole districts of men, who would otherwise have slumbered on in comparatively happy ignorance, are now little less than brutes in their lives, and something worse than brutes in their instincts, I could almost wish that the manufacturing districts were swallowed up as Sodom and [1] Gomorrah.

The wonderful powers of machinery can, by multiplied production, render the mere *arte facta* of life actually

cheaper . . . Now the *arte facta* are sought by the higher classes of society in a proportion incalculably beyond that in which they are sought by the lower classes; and therefore it is that the vast increase of mechanical powers has not cheapened life and pleasure to the poor as it has done to the rich. In some respects, no doubt, it has done so, as in giving cotton dresses to maid-servants, and penny gin to all. A pretty benefit, truly! [li]

Poor-laws are the inevitable accompaniments of an extensive commerce and a manufacturing system . . . The poor-rates are the consideration paid by, or on behalf of, capitalists for having labour at demand. It is the price, and nothing else. [lii]

Laissez-faire and Art

In this country there is no general reverence for the fine arts; and the sordid spirit of a money-amassing philosophy would meet any proposition for the fostering of art, in a genial and extended sense, with the commercial maxim — *Laissez-faire*. Paganini, indeed, will make a fortune, because he can actually sell the tones of his fiddle at so much a scrape; but Mozart himself might have languished in a garret for anything that would have been done for him here. [liii]

Sabbatarianism

I sincerely wish to preserve a decent quiet on Sunday. I would prohibit compulsory labour, and put down operas, theatres, etc., for this plain reason — that if the rich be allowed to play the poor will be forced, or, what comes to the same thing, will be induced, to work. I am not for a Paris Sunday. But to stop coaches, and let the gentleman's carriage run, is monstrous. [liv]

M A T U R I T Y

Votes for women

Although it may be allowed to be contrary to decorum that women should legislate; yet there can be no reason why women should not choose their representatives to legislate; and if it be said that they are merged in their husbands, let it be allowed where the wife has no separate property but where she has a distinct taxable estate, in which her husband has no interest, what right can her husband have to choose for her the person whose vote may affect her separate [lv] interest?

Philanthropists

I have never known a trader in philanthropy who was not wrong in heart somewhere or other. Individuals so distinguished are usually unhappy in their family relations — men not benevolent or beneficent to individuals, but almost hostile to them, yet lavishing money and labour and time on [lvi] the race, the abstract notion.

History

I have read all the famous histories, and, I believe, some history of every country and nation that is, or ever existed; but I never did so for the story itself as a story. The only thing interesting to me was the principles to be evolved from, and illustrated by, the facts. After I had gotten my principles, I pretty generally left the facts to take care of them- [lvii] selves.

The United States of America

Can there ever be any thorough national fusion of the Northern and Southern States? I think not. In fact, the Union will be shaken almost to dislocation whenever a very

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serious question between the States arises. The American Union has no *centre*, and it is impossible now to make one. [lviii]

Lack of reverence

There is now no reverence for anything; and the reason is, that men possess conceptions only, and all their knowledge is conceptional only. Now, as to conceive is a work of the mere understanding, and as all that can be conceived may be comprehended, it is impossible that a man should reverence that, to which he must always feel something in himself superior.

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- [l] *Table Talk*, p. 137: June 25th, 1831.
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- [lii] *Table Talk*, p. 190: July 24th, 1832.
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- [lv] *Ibid*, p. 165: Dec. 28th, 1831.
- [lvi] *Notes* (Omniana), pp. 299-300: 1812.
- [lvii] *Church and State*, pp. 20-33.
- [lviii] *Ibid*, pp. 38-9.
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- [lxi] *Table Talk*, p. 219: March 31st, 1833.
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- [ii] Ibid, pp. 134-5 and 139-40.
- [iii] Ibid, p. 171.
- [iv] Ibid, p. 173.
- [v] Pp. 190-216, from *2nd Lay Sermon*, condensed.
- [vi] *Table Talk*, p. 216: March 17th, 1833.
- [vii] Ibid, p. 197: Aug. 12th, 1832.
- [viii] Ibid, p. 307: June 2nd, 1834; and p. 310: June 23rd, 1834.
- [ix] Ibid, p. 433 (undated).
- [x] Ibid, pp. 216-17: March 17th, 1833.
- [xi] *Notes* (Omnia), pp. 298-9: 1812.
- [xii] *1st Lay Sermon*, pp. 43-4.
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- [xiv] *Essays*, Vol. III, pp. 701-3: *The Courier*, 1814.
- [xv] *1st Lay Sermon*, pp. 45-6.
- [xvi] *Table Talk*, p. 190: July 24th, 1832.
- [xvii] *1st Lay Sermon*, p. 47.
- [xviii] *Table Talk*, p. 169: May 20th, 1832.
- [xix] Ibid, pp. 173-4: April 5th, 1832.
- [xx] Ibid, p. 161: Nov. 20th, 1831.
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- [xxvii] Ibid, pp. 167-8: Feb. 24th, 1832.
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- [xxxvii] Ibid, Essay 5, pp. 134-8.
- [xxxviii] Ibid, Essay 4, pp. 116-17.
- [xxxix] *Biographia Literaria*, p. 97.
- [xl] *Table Talk*, p. 470 (undated: probably after 1830).
- [xli] Ibid, p. 225: April 8th, 1833.
- [xlii] Ibid, p. 413: Dec. 13th, 1819.
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- [xliv] Ibid, p. 45: April 27th, 1823.
- [xlv] Ibid, p. 119: July 4th, 1830.
- [xlvi] Ibid, p. 125: Sept. 8th, 1830.
- [xlvii] Ibid, p. 205, Jan. 20th, 1833.
- [xlviii] Ibid, p. 214: March 9th, 1833.
- [xlix] Ibid, p. 167: Feb. 22nd, 1832.
- [l] Ibid, pp. 433-4 (undated).
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- [lii] Ibid, pp. 45-6: April 27th, 1823.
- [liii] Ibid, pp. 140-1: July 7th, 1831.
- [liv] Ibid, p. 303: May 19th, 1834.

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- [lvii] Ibid, p. 186: July 13th, 1832.
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INTERPRETERS

SOME INTERPRETERS OF COLERIDGE AS A POLITICAL THINKER

PROBABLY the best study of Coleridge's political thought is the essay which John Stuart Mill wrote for the *Westminster Review* in 1840. It is to be found in his *Dissertations and Discussions*. He has also a fine tribute to Coleridge in the first pages of his essay on Bentham (1838). There are some interesting indications of the influence of Coleridge on Mill's generation in the latter's *Autobiography* (an excellent edition of which is in 'The World's Classics' Library).

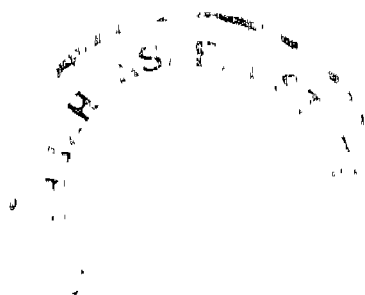
Of the numerous members of the Coleridge family who edited the works of their famous forefather, three are worthy of attention by the student of his political thought. His daughter Sara contributed some interesting notes on the origins and progress of the poet's opinions in the introduction to her three-volume edition of his *Essays on His Own Times* (1850). Coleridge's nephew, H. N. Coleridge, Sara's husband, provided an apologia for his uncle in his preface to the 1853 edition of the *Table Talk*, which is reprinted in the Oxford edition (see bibliography). Ernest Hartley Coleridge, to whom we owe the standard editions of the Letters and the Poems, collected a mass of notes for a life of S. T. C., but died leaving only a few scattered sections of unrevised MS. A selection from these was contributed by the Rev. G. H. B. Coleridge to a volume, published at the hundredth anniversary of the poet's death in 1934 (*Coleridge: studies by several hands . . .* Edited by Edmund Blunden and Earl Leslie Griggs, London, 1934). This selection contains some interesting details of the young Coleridge's 'Watchman Tour'. The same volume includes an essay on 'The Political Thought of Coleridge' by Harold Beeley. This is perhaps the best study of its subject for the general reader since Mill's essay.

More especially for students are the two chapters in Dr. Alfred

INTERPRETERS OF COLERIDGE

Cobban's *Edmund Burke and the Revolt against the Eighteenth Century* (London, 1929). Dr. Cobban, however, has little patience with Coleridge's metaphysics. The chapter on Coleridge's political thought in Professor Muirhead's *Coleridge as Philosopher* (London, 1930), shows convincingly how absolutely integral to Coleridge's political thought his metaphysics are. An interesting attempt to place Coleridge in the history of the Tory party is to be found in Keith Feiling's *Sketches in Nineteenth Century Biography* (London, 1930).

Of more general studies of Coleridge, Stephen Potter's *Coleridge and S. T. C.* is particularly valuable for the Pantisocracy period: but the whole book is of fascinating interest for all who are attracted by the mystery of Coleridge's personality.



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